







# GENERAL TURNER ASHBY

## THE CENTAUR OF THE SOUTH

### A MILITARY SKETCH

BY  
CLARENCE THOMAS



WINCHESTER, VA.  
PRINTED BY THE EDDY PRESS CORPORATION  
1907

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June 20, 1907  
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## PREFACE

The writer has essayed this sketch of General Turner Ashby at the instance of some of his men, and in accordance with his own desire. If he has "hewed to the line, letting chips fall where they would," it has been done in the interest of long delayed justice. He makes his acknowledgments to Colonel R. Preston Chew, Major John W. Carter, Drs. West and Settle for valuable letters and information. To Miss Kate E. Carter for the picture of General Ashby on the white horse. To J. P. West, Abner Rector and others for information, facts and incidents. To Mr. H. E. Adams for Henderson's Last Edition or Impression of General Jackson's Life. He is also indebted to "Destruction and Reconstruction," to Henderson's and Cooke's Lives of Jackson, to "Ashby and His Compeers" by the Rev. Mr. Averitt, to Mr. Jno. St. C. Brooks for valuable assistance, to C. G. Lee for courtesies relating to the half-tones, and to the Rev. J. Wm. Jones, D. D., for his valued introduction.

This sketch is based first on the United States Official War Records of Confederate and Federal

forces, supplemented with references from the histories named and the best living testimony. If the writer has succeeded in doing justice to the first most brilliant actor of the war of 1861-5, he will be fully compensated for all the research this sketch has imposed.

CLARENCE THOMAS.

“Rutledge,” near Middleburg, Loudoun County,  
Virginia, June, 1907.

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## INTRODUCTION

Turner Ashby, "the Knight of the Valley," was unquestionably one of the most romantic characters of the war.

Like Nathan Bedford Forrest, John B. Gordon, Stirling Price, Wade Hampton, John H. Morgan, and others who, never having received a military education, yet rose to high rank, and wide reputation, Turner Ashby left the quiet pursuits of civil life and became one of the most distinguished soldiers who made our great struggle for constitutional freedom.

He had been widely known in Northern Virginia as a high-toned gentleman, a superb rider, and a successful contestant at the tournaments of his day, and had raised a volunteer cavalry company, of which he had been made captain, which did important service in the John Brown raid.

He was, as were a large majority of our Virginia people, an ardent Union man, warmly in favor of doing everything possible to preserve the Union, and the Constitution which our fathers made. But when Mr. Lincoln, in violation of the Constitution and his oath to support it, called for seventy-five thousand men to coerce sovereign states who had simply exercised their "God-given right of self-government," and called on Virginia to furnish her quota, brave old John Letcher,

the Governor of the State, replied: "You can get no troops from Virginia for any such wicked purpose. \* \* \* You have chosen to inaugurate civil war," the Virginia Convention, then in session, passed on the seventeenth day of April, 1861, an ordinance of secession withdrawing the Old Dominion from the Union, and resuming the powers she had expressly "reserved" when she originally ratified the Constitution, and joined the "Republic of Republics."

It was, of course, well known that in this unholy war which Abraham Lincoln and his coadjutors had inaugurated, Virginia had barred her breast to the coming storm—that she was to be "the Flanders of the War"—that her soil was to be the first overrun—and that her sons and daughters were to be the greatest sufferers. And yet her people did not hesitate. Colonel John B. Baldwin, the able leader of the Union party in the Virginia Convention, expressed the general sentiment of our people when, in reply to a letter from a friend at the North asking "What are the Union men of Virginia going to do now?" he wrote: "We have no 'Union' men in Virginia now, but those who were 'Union men' will stand to their guns, and make a fight which will shine out on the page of history as an example of what a brave people can do after exhausting every means of pacification." And so Robert

Edward Lee, and Joseph E. Johnston, and Stonewall Jackson, and J. E. B. Stuart, and A. P. Hill, and Jubal A. Early, and R. S. Ewell, and Fitz. Lee, and W. H. F. Lee, and thousands of others of our bravest and best, rallied to the defence of our homes and firesides.

There could be no doubt as to where Turner Ashby would stand in this crisis of his State's history. He was a lineal descendant of Captain Jack Ashby of the Revolution, and others of his forefathers had fought for liberty in the days of the Revolution. He was a Virginian of the Virginians, and when his State was invaded he did not hesitate to rally his company and meet the enemy on the frontier.

His name and deeds soon became household words in the Valley, and in Virginia, and he was steadily promoted until he became Brigadier-General, and had before him higher promotion and wider fame when he fell at the post of duty.

There can be but little doubt that had he lived he would have been universally recognized as one of the very ablest of our patriotic leaders.

I have read with deep interest this sketch of the career of Ashby which Mr. Thomas has given us, and commend it as a valuable contribution to our Confederate history.

He pictures with graphic pen the life of this valiant knight, brings out the salient points of his

conduct as a soldier, and shows that he was not merely a brilliant partisan but a man who was able to command armies, and every way worthy to be "Jackson's right arm," and his probable successor in command of the Valley District. He produces historical matter, official and personal, relating to Ashby, never before published.

The sons and daughters of the Confederacy should never be allowed to forget the patriotic heroism of their fathers, and the great struggle they made against "overwhelming numbers and resources," and among the ablest leaders of our Southland they should put high up on the roll TURNER ASHBY. This book, therefore, should be in every library.

J. Wm. Jones.

Richmond, Va.



## Chapter I.

### UPPERVILLE 1859.

“Declare, O Muse! in what ill-fated hour,  
Sprung the fierce strife, from what offended  
power”?

—Iliad.

Four miles east of the Blue Ridge Mountains, in the Old Dominion, where the counties of Fauquier and Loudoun mingle their rich life of grain and blue grass, hill and meadow, is located the picturesque village of Upperville.

This section, southern Loudoun and northern Fauquier, form the heart of the blue grass region of Virginia, where the cattle graze upon a thousand hills. Large grazing lands naturally produce large estates and mansions with corresponding equipments; and the Almighty from the beginning had set the crown of grandeur and beauty upon the landscape.

From the big poplar on the mountain at Ashby's Gap the Capitol at Washington can be seen with a glass, presenting in bas-relief Virginia

and Maryland standing guard over the flowing river that unites and divides them. From McKenister's Hill, the nearer view, the scenes are cut more in cameo in their picturesque loveliness.

When a child wandering over these dear familiar haunts, the mountain horn made music to his ear as the distant echoes fell "o'er cliff and scar," hill and vale. These views from the grand battlements of nature have their similitude only in the outlook which incited the challenge of the Evil Spirit to the Divine Man to fall down and worship him.

In this enlightened civilization of rural endeavor the cunning hand of the money-king had neither part nor lot. There were none exceedingly rich and none extremely poor. The poor man's rights were jealously guarded, and his children quietly educated without cost to him at the schools by and with his more fortunate neighbor. The social fabric was "sui generis." Each house had its traditions, its servants, its social status and its horses. These horses were noted throughout the country, especially the Telegraph and Oregon. The prevailing colors were bay in Telegraph and sorrel in Oregon. Their natural gifts were culti-

vated by fine training. They could go sixty miles a day with more ease to the rider than a cross-country saddler can go ten miles to-day.

Fox hunting was an all-day sport, the rider and horse taking stone fence and stream close upon the heels of the dogs. It is not only difficult but impossible to explain to the Northern and Western man the affectionate regard which united master and servant. The servant had not a care, and, with exceptions, light work. Everything was provided for him, and he was not only content but happy. The young servant united in the games of the day with his young master, and if the play became rough and the servant was hurt the master was called up and chastised. After night-fall was the happy time when the quarter rang with song, trombones or banjo. Just before bed-time silence fell upon the merry-makers, and the older servants would begin ghost stories. After a while the youngster would get excited, the goose flesh rising more and more, and when he could stand no more the "black mammy" would grab her charge and scurry for the back door of the big house, and the child would break for his mother's arms. The youths were first taught to ride, shoot,

and speak the truth, basic principles of their future training.

In the village was located a noted private school under the charge of an Irish gentleman <sup>1</sup> who prepared students for the University of Virginia and the Virginia Military Institute. This school bore a high reputation, and had scholars from every Southern State.

In the country the dinner party was the social attraction. In the village, the dance, the handed tea or supper. In the country the gentlemen rode to the hounds or followed the setter and pointer after Bob White. In the town they played football, bandy or fives, and the boys round town and marbles. The girls were taught by teachers in their homes, and generally finished at some polite school of the State or adjoining State. At stated periods the large old carriage, holding an indefinite number with box seat, Uncle Harry handling the ribbons over a sleek pair, was brought into use. On these occasions the family paid visits to friends and relatives at some distance for weeks at a time. Uncle Harry, arrayed in his beaver and broad cloth, became the proud guar-

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<sup>1</sup> Captain Armstrong, killed in the Confederate Army.

dian of the mistress and her children. Every house that received, and a majority did, had apple jack or Bourbon set out on the mahogany. The glasses and cut loaf were there, too, with the mint. The social hour was held always before dinner. No gentlemen drank after that meal. The social glass was confined to the older gentlemen.

“ Then pleasure took up the glass of time  
And turned it in his glowing hands,  
Every moment lightly shaken  
Ran itself in golden sands.”

It was a rare thing to see a “ tipsy ” gentleman, and if he could not “ toe the mark ” he was at once taken to his room. It was deemed ungallant to associate with ladies or be seen upon the streets in such a state, as it was also thought discourteous to smoke while riding or walking with them. A lady’s name was never mentioned in public except to inquire after her health. In print her name was only mentioned twice, at her nuptials and at her demise. It is true gentlemen did not wear swords, but the derringer, duelling, and Colt’s pistols were prevalent, and the gentleman was an

expert shot. Personal difficulties were not redressed in courts of law. The principals and friends had recourse to another court. If the amende honorable was not made and accepted, seconds and pistols became arbiters.

Among the current papers were the Washington, Baltimore, New York, Richmond, and Alexandria press. In literature, Poe, Bryant, Longfellow, Scott, Byron, and Shakespeare, also Macaulay, and Gibbon. The Literary Messenger, Harper's Magazine, and the English periodicals, Blackwood's and Edinburgh Review. Lord Macaulay, who soon afterwards passed away, had left the lion's paw of his genius upon history and literature. To this purest English writer many a Southern gentleman is indebted directly or indirectly for the royal pathway of the classics. In the midst of this enlightened atmosphere there grew up harmonious and happy relations between all classes and conditions of the community.

The inalienable rights of man were open and free as the mountain air he breathed, and all had a "fair chance for the white alley."

Black slavery becomes an idyl when contrasted with the white bondage of the industrial tyranny

and monopoly of to-day. The fight is now no longer for the ideal and larger life, but for a higher scale of dollars on one side, and on the other the harder struggle to keep the wolf from the door.

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“The Painterskin” (Panther Skin) flecked its spots in the sunlight as it fretted and fumed along its banks to Green Garden. The carnival of Indian Summer burning from her mountain altars cast a dreamy splendor over field and stream, church and spire. Into the village from every direction and all roads the crowds flocked in all conceivable conveyances. By noon the streets and houses were packed with ladies and gentlemen, dressed in all the bravery of a gala day. The young gentlemen were booted and spurred like the knights of old, when the tournament in the days of chivalry was the “handmaiden of Christianity.” Each knight upon his Telegraph or Oregon charger wore the colors of some fair maid, and each fair maid blushed with hope for the crown of beauty. The knights of Blue Ridge, Piedmont, Ivanhoe and many other curled darl-

ings of fortune were there. The straight, hard riders at fence and ditch were there. "The glass of fashion and the mold of form," in woman, man and steed were there. Venus was also there, and, as the Graces unloosed her quiver, the malignant Elf for once was not there. The judges take the stand, and the herald calls the list of knights. The rings swung from the arms of three poles in line are up. To take with the lance each ring in three successive rides is the highest goal. The charge to the knights is delivered, and the herald calls the knights separately, as each enters the lists through the thirty odd names. Piedmont wins six, Ivanhoe seven, and Blue Ridge eight. Apparently Blue Ridge has won the prize, and expectancy looks from each face and beats in every heart. The judges read over the program again, and order the herald to announce "One knight has not yet ridden." Excitement now flutters fans and stirs to murmurs, then breaks into, He comes! He comes! The Knight of the Black Plume. The stranger asks, Who is he? The answer is too surely reflected in each knight's face, for their hearts have gone down into their boots. The Knight of the Black Plume, mounted upon



a stallion as black as his own beard, sits without regalia motionless as a picturesque Andalusian. With the touch of the hand on the bridle-reins, rider and steed dash for the rings, taking all three times. Then without saddle and bridle takes all the rings again. Applause and cheer follow fast and follow faster as the magnanimous cavalier bows to the Knight of Blue Ridge and resigns the crown of love and beauty. That day "the bridal of the earth and sky" first rang out the "Rebel Yell" over mountain, field and stream, the echoes of which, from Manassas to Appomattox, was the victor's paeon or his comrades' requiem. To this feast of chivalry the malignant Elf flew at last, whispering murder, arson, John Brown, Harper's Ferry! The black-plumed knight bridles and saddles his horse. He is no longer a parlor knight, but a soldier giving orders for his volunteer cavalry company to meet him at Harper's Ferry. Then Turner Ashby rides away to The Craggs, his mountain home.



## Chapter II.

### JOHN BROWN'S RAID.

Turner Ashby was born at Rose Bank, Fauquier County, Virginia, the twenty-third day of October, 1828. He was the third of six children. His younger brother, Richard, was born October 2, 1831. Both brothers were unmarried. Their father, Colonel Turner Ashby, married Miss Dorothy Green of Rappahannock County, Virginia, the daughter of James and Elizabeth Green. Colonel Turner Ashby was an officer in the War of 1812. They were also descendants of Revolutionary stock. General Turner Ashby was educated in the private schools which before the war abounded throughout the State. His marked characteristics were, as a youth, generosity, modesty, daring and a passion for horses. He was universally acknowledged to be the most perfect horseman of all the fine riders of Northern Virginia. When in the vicissitudes of business Rose Bank was sold, he bought The Craggs at Markham, Fauquier County, Virginia,

a few miles away from his old roof tree. At The Craggs he lived till the beginning of the war and owned it till his death. When Virginia called Ashby to her defence, as we ride with him, we will see how he kept her commandments and bore her court of arms "*sic semper tyrannis*" amid shot and shell upon the red storm of battle. The shock of the John Brown raid into Virginia ends the golden era of the Southern civilization, never again to be reproduced by any other people. Ashby, gathering his men as he rode to Harper's Ferry, promptly arrived on the ground. His principal duty there was picket and outpost work. After the capture of Brown and his emissaries, the government of Virginia had them transferred to the jail of Charlestown, the beautiful county seat of Jefferson County. Later they were tried according to the laws of the State, condemned and executed upon the scaffold. As an incident of the trial of Cooke, Senator Voorhees defended him in a brilliant and eloquent appeal. The reader of that speech will look in vain for justification of his client. He dwelt upon his youth and inexperience, and that he had been used as a tool of the older plotters of insurrection, arson

and murder. His only plea was for mercy with the extenuating circumstances noted.

A great fear fell upon the people, and men went about with bated breath. Shotguns, flint lock muskets and some Hall's rifles were brought out and cleaned up. A patrol was formed for every neighborhood, and a slave for the first time was required to have a pass from his master, before he could leave his home after nightfall. The fear was not that the North would then invade the South, though this was done some eighteen months later; but that the colored race would rise in a general massacre. We agree with Ashby that this was the beginning of the war; but it is well known that he was opposed to secession as long as it could honorably be avoided. Ashby, after the executions at Charlestown, returned with his volunteer cavalry company to his home.

Harper's Magazine had a very large circulation in Northern Virginia at this time, and by far the finest picture of Ashby extant was found in its pages. It was taken upon the famous white horse. Harper's Magazine, however, was dropped like a coal of fire. At Harper's Ferry for the first time Ashby met Lee, Jackson, and Stuart. These

four representative men of the South drew capital prizes in the lottery of fate when times tried men's souls. Three of these in the prowess of their genius went down at the banquet of death where "the grape was lead and the wine was blood." The fourth lived to the close and after the war, to challenge the admiration of mankind, as the greatest soldier and the most perfect citizen, and, like Socrates, died obedient unto law. The experience gained at Harper's Ferry stood Ashby well in hand when, eighteen months later, he arrived there at the first call to arms. He was doing duty and tenting on the camp ground. In 1860 Ashby's company, in recognition of his services at Harper's Ferry and their regard for him, presented him with a silver service. An uncle of the writer, then a member of his company, was selected to present it. He offered the service, in a few remarks testifying their esteem. Ashby, in trying to return thanks, broke down and could only bow his acknowledgments. And thus waited this modest country gentleman in his hospitable home to become one of Virginia's noblest sacrifices. This section of Virginia produced two of the most heroic figures of those heroic times. The

subject of this sketch lived not far from Upper-ville, the home of General Lewis A. Armistead, the foremost figure in Pickett's great charge at Gettysburg. These gentlemen were warm friends, and in their association in 1859-60 hoped for the best, but were fearful of the coming storm. Armistead fell inside the works at Gettysburg, the farthest point reached by any troops. While dying he said to a Federal officer, "You can't whip men who can live and fight on this, parched corn."





## Chapter III.

### BEGINNING OF THE WAR.

To discuss secession in this sketch would be both trite and academic. A few lines will suffice to show where Virginia stood on this momentous question. On the fourteenth day of April, 1861, the President of the United States issued his call for seventy-five thousand troops with which to coerce the seceding Southern States. Virginia was included in this call for her quota. Up to this time the Constitutional Convention, assembled at Richmond, refused to secede by a large majority. Three days after the call for troops, Virginia left the Union by an almost unanimous vote. Colonel R. E. Lee was chosen at once by the convention as the commander-in-chief of all the Virginia forces, with the rank of major-general. Why did the State of Virginia delay so long in her action? Because she loved peace, and wished to exhaust every means in her power, through her commissioners repeatedly sent to Washington to avoid war. Then why did she in three days make her decision? Under the call for

troops she either had to make war on her sister Southern States or do battle for and with them. She did not hesitate to accept the gage, though she well knew her bosom would bear the wounds and scars, the hoof-beats and ruin of the greatest revolution of modern history. The cause of war was in principle States' Rights. The States' Rights of those times is the home rule of these times. The States' Rights or home rule of these times has almost belted the globe. Yet in the United States, its birth place, it has become a rare exotic. Beware, lest centralization, in sapping liberty, engender not a greater revolution than secession. Lord Macaulay, in writing about this country, said the time might come when our "civilization would destroy liberty or our liberty destroy civilization." We say, in leaving this subject, let those without sin against the Constitution cast the first stone at the South. As soon as the wire flashed the news that Virginia had been forced from the Union to which she had given so much and done so much to create, Ashby called his men together and proceeded at once to the border at Harper's Ferry. He arrived in time to see the arsenal go up in smoke by the order of

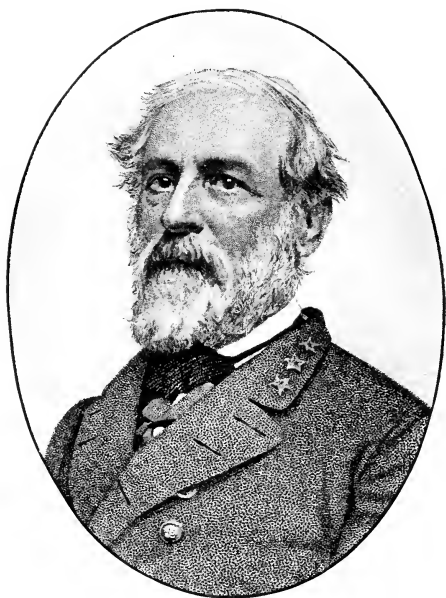
the United States Government. After consultation with General Harper, commanding the militia at Harper's Ferry, Ashby with his company, some infantry and artillery, proceeded lower down the Potomac River to the Point of Rocks to guard that bridge. He held this point also as a connecting link between Harper's Ferry and Leesburg, where Colonel Eppa Hunton was organizing the Eighth Virginia Regiment of Volunteers and commanding at that point. As the Eighth Virginia Regiment was recruited from the same class of men and same section of Virginia as those who followed Ashby, who was reporting to Colonel Hunton on the one side at this time, the writer deems it appropriate to make a short reference to it. From first Manassas to Appomattox it bore a gallant part in all the battles under General J. E. Johnston and General Lee in Virginia. After the battle of Ball's Bluff, near Leesburg, Virginia, it was called the "Bloody Eighth" for its stubborn resistance against heavy odds, and routing the enemy after sundown with the bayonet. In the seven days' battles around Richmond it proved its metal again, and at Gaines' Mill, and as a part of Pickett's Division, helped to

storm and capture Porter's gun behind three lines of breastworks and heavily supported by infantry and artillery.

At Gettysburg,<sup>1</sup> under the bold and dashing Pickett, it lost one hundred and ninety men out of two hundred that started with the charging column. After Gettysburg, Colonel Hunton was promoted to command the old brigade with the rank of brigadier-general. From this time to the close of the war the Eighth Virginia was also known as the Berkeley Regiment. The four Berkeley brothers at the same time were the field officers and a captain. Colonel Norborne Berkeley, Lieutenant-Colonel Edmund Berkeley, Major William N. Berkeley and Captain Charles F. Berkeley. It is a remarkable fact that all these brothers were wounded and captured, but lived through the war. We would like to dwell upon many other brave officers and men of this regiment, but it would be irrelevant. Its officers and men will challenge comparison with any others in the great army of Northern Virginia. The

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<sup>1</sup> General Eppa Hunton, Colonels Berkeley, Adjutant T. B. Hutchison, Captains A. E. Mathews and John Gray, Lieutenant Ben. Hutchison and brother, and Captain J. R. Hutchison.



GENERAL R. E. LEE



Leesburg company of infantry belonged to the Seventeenth Virginia Regiment, and that splendid command had no more distinguished company than the one from Leesburg. At the Point of Rocks many brave sons of Maryland joined Ashby and were incorporated into Company G, in the formation of the Seventh Virginia Cavalry, first commanded by Colonel Angus McDonald, then Ashby. Colonel McDonald was over the age limit at the beginning of the war, but his ardor and courage brooked no obstacle. Later, owing to physical infirmities, he was transferred to another branch of the service.

The following extracts from Lieutenant-Colonel Deas, A. G., of May 21st and 23rd, 1861, show how Ashby, from the start, commanded important posts with infantry, artillery, and cavalry.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ On Sunday, the nineteenth instant, in the evening, I visited the position opposite the Point of Rocks, distant twelve miles from this point (Harper’s Ferry), where Captain Ashby of the Virginia Cavalry, an excellent officer, is stationed, with two companies of cavalry, six pieces of light

artillery and a company of rifle men, together with some men of Maryland only a part of whom are armed. His cavalry is employed in active reconnoissance of the surrounding country, and his artillery has complete command of the bridge crossing the Potomac, the piers of which are mined and can be instantly destroyed in case of necessity; in addition to which he holds possession of the road at the Point of Rocks in such a manner as to prevent the passage of a train."

\* \* \* \* \*

As showing the importance of the position selected by Captain Ashby, without commission, Lieut.-Col. Deas reports again to the War Department:

\* \* \* \* \*

"There are six guns with Captain Imboden's company at Point of Rocks. At this place Captain Ashby is stationed with two companies of cavalry and two hundred infantry, his total force amounting to four hundred men, one hundred and thirty-three horses and six guns. His cavalry covers the country for twenty miles to his rear.  
\* \* \* I am quite confident with the vigilance



which is exercised by Captain Ashby no enemy can pass the point which he is directed to observe.”<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

A little later General Joseph E. Johnston, commanding at Harper's Ferry, reports on Captain Ashby to the War Department: "Captain Ashby, commanding near Point of Rocks, was instructed by my predecessor to break the railroad whenever he found such a means necessary for his defense. These instructions were repeated by me. Captain Ashby reported this morning, that in consequence of intelligence just received, he is about to throw a mass of rock upon it by blasting." <sup>2</sup>

Again, General Lee writing to General Johnston on May 30, 1861, endorses the military judgment as displayed by Ashby in holding the Point of Rocks as an outpost and connecting link between Leesburg and Harper's Ferry.

"Colonel Eppa Hunton, commanding at Leesburg, has been ordered to have an outpost at Drainsville. \* \* \* He is to inform you of any

<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 2, page 861. Ibid 863.

<sup>2</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 2, page 881.

movement of the United States troops in the direction of Leesburg tending to threaten your rear through Captain Ashby of the Cavalry at the Point of Rocks.”<sup>1</sup>

Ashby had not received a military education, but his soldierly nature had seized upon this as the vital point on the border. The judgment of Ashby was further endorsed, as we have seen, by reinforcements being added to his original command at the Point of Rocks. At this time General Joseph E. Johnston ordered Ashby to report to Colonel J. E. B. Stuart under Johnston at Harper's Ferry. At the same time Ashby had already been ordered by Colonel McDonald to report to his own regiment, the 7th Virginia. Ashby calls the attention of General Johnston in refusing to obey his orders to two facts: First, that Colonel McDonald had already ordered him to report to his own regiment. Secondly, that the Governor of Virginia had expressly provided that the troops of the State when mustered in to the service of the Confederate States should preserve their “regimental organization.” The following

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 2, page 894.

personal and official letters will show how Ashby won his first fight with his friends:

“Harper’s Ferry,

“June 16, 1861.

“Captain:

“Your party has just reported to me. Let me offer you my cordial thanks for your services, especially the last. I assure you that the knowledge that you were between me and the enemy made me sleep soundly last night, and that your presence among the troops under my command would always have such an effect. Whenever I may be serving under circumstances agreeable to you, be assured that it would be a matter of professional and personal gratification to me to be associated with you. \* \* \*

“With the hope of meeting you often hereafter, I remain,

“Respectfully and truly,

“J. E. Johnston.”<sup>1</sup>

Could a note from a commander to an almost unknown subordinate be more complimentary and

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<sup>1</sup> Averitt—Appendix 395-6.

gracious? So much for the personal note, and next we will read the official order.

“ Headquarters Army of the Potomac,  
“ July 23, 1861.  
“ Colonel:

“ You have been appointed Lieutenant-Colonel in the Virginia Cavalry, with orders to report to General Johnston. The General directs me to say that he will leave it optional with yourself either to remain with Colonel McDonald or to report to him. “ Respectfully your obedient servant,

“ Thos. G. Rhett,

“ A. A. General.” <sup>1</sup>

The General had early discovered the soldier in Ashby. He had also discovered that when Ashby took a decided stand his action was based on right, and no power could move him. The writer has pleasure in acknowledging that General Johnston at once not only saw his mistake, but had the manhood and grace to both highly compliment and promote the subject of it from a captain, without commission, to a lieutenant-colonel, with commission.

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<sup>1</sup> Averitt—Appendix 399.

## Chapter IV.

### ORGANIZATION OF THE SEVENTH VIRGINIA CAVALRY—ROMNEY —CAPT. RICHARD ASHBY.

With the view of giving the organization of the Seventh Virginia Cavalry, the following extract is quoted from Colonel McDonald's report to the War Department:

“ Headquarters, Romney, Va.,  
“ June 25, 1861.

“ Hon. L. P. Walker,  
“ Secretary of War, Richmond, Va.  
“ Sir:

“ On the fifth instant I had the honor to receive at the hands of the President the commission of Colonel of Cavalry in the Army of the Confederate States.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ On the fifteenth instant Captain Turner Ashby, commanding a troop belonging to Colonel Hunton's Regiment, reported he had obtained from General Johnston permission to rejoin his own regiment, \* \* \* therefore his troop joined me at Winchester. \* \* \* I am obliged, there-

fore, to ask in advance of the full organization of my regiment \* \* \* that Captain Turner Ashby be commissioned as Lieutenant-Colonel, and Dr. O. R. Funston as Major of my Regiment. \* \* \* As to Captain Ashby, I need not speak of his qualities, for already he is known as one of the best partisan leaders in the service; himself a thorough soldier, he is eminently qualified to command. I sincerely trust that the commission asked for may issue to him. \* \* \* In order that the demoralizing influences of campaign life, particularly that which attaches to border war, may be counteracted as far as possible, the Rev. James B. Averitt, of the Episcopal Church, has been induced by me to accompany the command as acting Chaplain of the regiment.

“I ask therefore this gentleman may be appointed Chaplain of my command, and that his commission may issue for same.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I have the honor to be most respectfully your obedient servant,

“Angus W. McDonald,

“Col. Cav. C. S. Army.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 2, pages 952, 954.

Colonel McDonald, acting under the directions of the War Department, established his headquarters at Romney, with the view of executing such orders as burning bridges, especially the large bridge on Cheat River. It was expected in this way to obstruct the movements of General McClellan's operations. Lieut.-Col. Ashby occupied a position six miles below Romney on the river upon the estate of Colonel George Washington. His pickets were thrown across the river and scouted to Cumberland, which was held by the Federal troops. Some Union men infested the country and their arrest was deemed the best way to prevent information from being carried to the enemy. Captain Richard Ashby, brother of the Colonel, was ordered to arrest one of these men who, it was reported, had been especially obnoxious to the people. Captain Richard Ashby formed a small squad of troops and started immediately to execute his orders. Arriving at the place, where he expected to find his man he found he had escaped. He pushed on and came out on the track of the B. & O. Railroad. Advancing along the railroad he soon discovered the enemy were trying to ambush him from the mountain

gorges nearby. Seeing he was largely outnumbered, he turned back on the railroad. Wheeling and fighting as he and his men retreated, he ordered them to take care of themselves. As his horse attempted to clear a cattle guard, it slipped and fell. Recovering himself from horse and guard, there ensued one of the most desperate hand-to-hand fights of the war. One against many, when he was found he was covered with wounds and left for dead. Lieut.-Col. Ashby, scouting, had heard firing, or was informed of the fighting, and pressed hard on the heels of the enemy. Coming opposite Kelly's Island in the Potomac, he struck the enemy there, and the command rang out, "Charge them, men, charge!" The bulge soon won the fight, for Turner Ashby rode that day with smoking pistols and a bloody spur. The accounts at that time say he and his scouting party killed as many of the enemy as he had in his own party. Ashby also suffered loss. Dr. O. Fountain, of Baltimore, and young Foley, of Loudoun County, were killed, both gallant soldiers. Lieut.-Col. Ashby, fearing the worst, rode back and found his brother alive, but almost exhausted from his wounds. He and his comrades



improvised a litter and carried him to the hospitable mansion of Col. George Washington, Ridgedale, nearby. Captain Ashby lingered for about a week, when his chivalrous soul yielded to death. These brothers were bound together with "hooks of steel," and Turner Ashby became a changed man, devoted to the memory of his brother and to a cause to be lost. The one seemed to forecast the other. His personality, always gentle and reserved, held now the mystery of sorrow, and the admiration of his comrades turned to devotion.

About the seventeenth day of July, Colonel McDonald received orders to report to Winchester with the Seventh Regiment. Lieut.-Col. Ashby arrived on the nineteenth, and found General J. E. Johnston's army en route for Manassas. Ashby made a daring raid on the twentieth day of July in the direction of General Patterson's line, and, in places, penetrated it. He found the Federal general in complete ignorance of General Johnston's fast backward reinforcement of General Beauregard at Manassas, and he so reported. This information, discovered and reported by Ashby, permitted Johnston to withdraw all the

remaining force he had left at Winchester in front of Patterson.

The writer has a vivid recollection, as a small boy, of some of the infantry passing through Upperville en route by the Piedmont turnpike, in making this move to the Manassas branch railroad. The shorter route, after passing Ashby's Gap, by way of Paris, to Piedmont Station, now Delaplaine, was so overcrowded by the advance of Johnston's army that the Upperville route had to be used also. Old men, ladies, girls, children, and servants, all had their places along the marching columns, with sandwiches, buttermilk, water, and everything needed by hungry and tired soldiers. No stop was made; the men ate and drank as they marched, and the boys would run along by the troops and bring back the glasses and cups. Oh, the swing of the step, the laugh and jest of those dirty darlings in gray! Every fellow seemed afraid he would miss the first great battle of the war. This spirit meant business and defeat for General McDowell. It meant business and death, too, for many of those glorious fellows. Ashby, finding he had masked Johnston's movement completely from Patterson, moved on Sunday, the

twenty-first day of July, 1861, about midway between Winchester and Manassas, and late in the afternoon of that day passed through Upper-ville and camped that night about old Clifton Mills, a short distance east of the town. This was the last time the writer ever saw him. He had frequently been a guest at the writer's home, and, though reserved, he was attractive to everybody, and especially to children. Maturer years and reflection teach many things. The boy did not know that the angle of reflection was equal to the angle of incident. Physics teaches the great natural laws. On this principle we now realize that we are part of all we see, hear, learn, and with which we come in contact. Those who hold this receptive power have become the world's greatest soldiers, orators, and statesmen. It makes leaders of men. Two notable examples, who lived long enough to illustrate this natural law, are said to be Lee and Napoleon. There is no other way to account for Ashby's genius for war and leadership. He was without military training, and had not shown any special aptitude or distinction in civil life. The angle of reflection was ever equal to the angle of incident—the

danger, the emergency of the hour he met equaled or conquered. He was stirred at the sound of Beauregard's guns, which he could hear after crossing the Blue Ridge, but his duty, for once, was to serve by waiting. The next morning the Seventh marched to Haymarket, on the twenty-third of July to Bristow Station, and the next day towards Staunton. On this march to the Valley of Virginia, though he passed near his own home, he did not visit it, but allowed his men, who were near enough, to go by their homes. He would never take a furlough, even when sick, but always took the sunshine and the storm with his men.

The following extracts from Lieut.-Col. Ashby relate to the attempt to destroy the B. & O. Canal, and his "peculiar position," while commanding at Harper's Ferry in September, 1861, and are addressed to A. G. Cooper, Richmond.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I think it proper to state to you my position. I am in command of a detachment of Colonel McDonald's regiment together with a force of militia furnished me by General Carson, for the purpose of protecting Mr. Sharpe, Government Agent,

now removing engines, etc., from B. & O. Road to Strasburg. There are now stationed on the Maryland side of the Potomac opposite this county (Jefferson) two infantry regiments guarding the canal which is transporting coal and other supplies. \* \* \* I am confident if not inconsistent with the present policy of the Government, that I can move over at some convenient point and break the canal, securing a large amount of salt, etc. \* \* \* I have had occasional skirmishes with the enemy in this vicinity, they having crossed twice. \* \* \* I have driven them back each time without loss, having only one man wounded. \* \* \* I have killed several of them each time. \* \* \* I write this owing to my peculiar position, acting by order of Colonel McDonald, who is or is to be in a different locality, too far to give his attention to the minutiae of my movements, and too having under my command other forces than his regiment, with no definite instructions as to the policy to be pursued toward the enemy in this locality. Will you give them to me?"<sup>1</sup>

The following letter from A. A. G. Office is a reply regarding the destruction of the canal:

<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 5, pages 858-9.

“ Richmond, September 19, 1861.

“ Lieut.-Col. Ashby,  
Commanding Halltown,  
Jefferson County, Va.

“ In reply to your letter of ——— instant from Halltown, I am instructed to inform you that it has been our object with the President for some time past to destroy the canal at any point where it could not be repaired. If this can be accomplished at the mouth of the Monocacy, the destruction would be irreparable for an indefinite period. The destruction of the canal and the railroad have been cherished objects, and the disappointment at the failure of all past attempts to effect them has been proportionate to the importance attached to their achievement. But while this much is said on the subject it is intended that any attempt of the kind should be made with the greatest caution, so that the safety of the command \* \* \* .

Very respectfully, &c.,

R. H. Shelton,

Asst. Adj. General.” <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 5, pages 858-9.

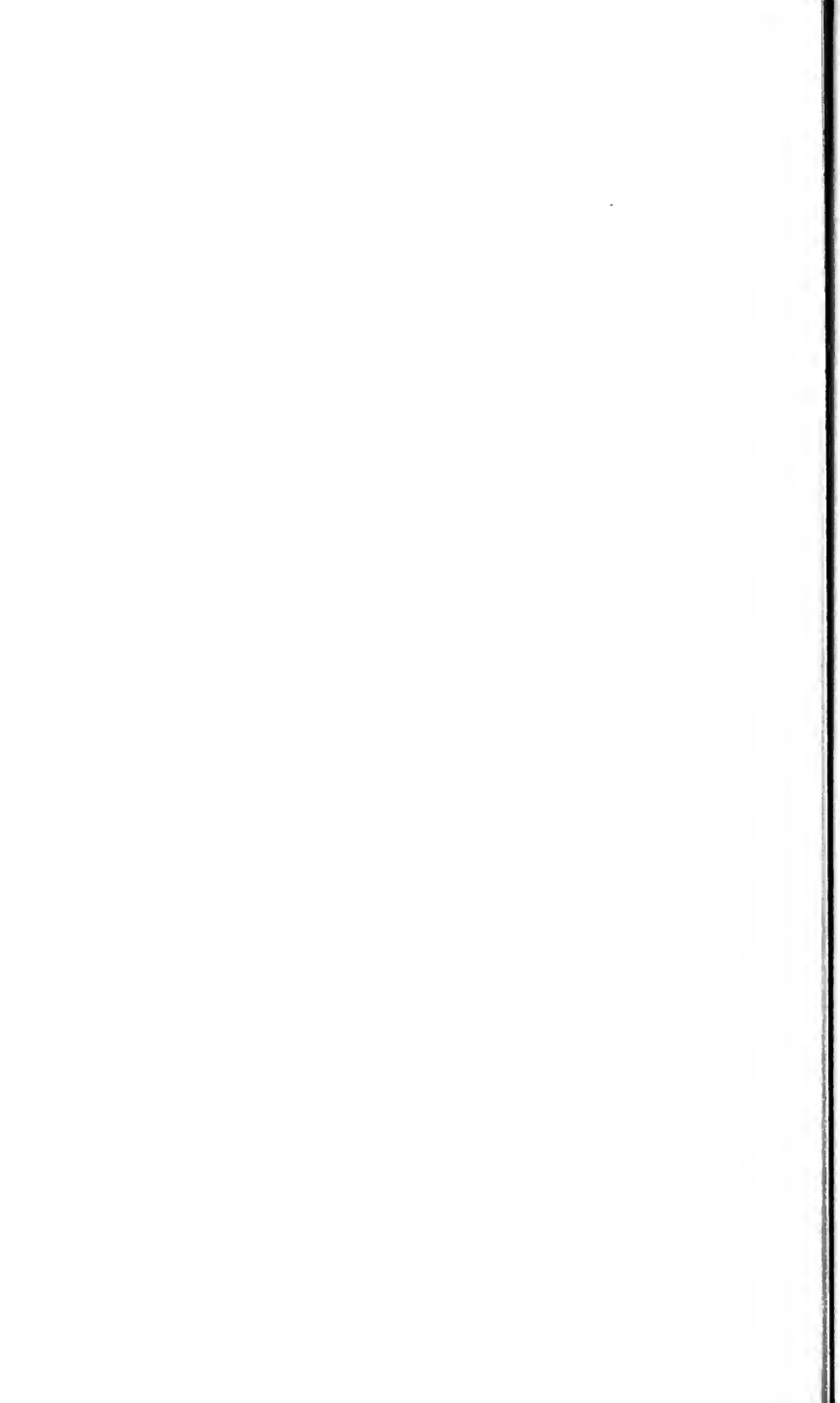
The extreme caution enjoined in the above note to Ashby no doubt prevented him from executing the instructions so long cherished by the Confederate Government, to have the canal destroyed. Ashby always took "the bulge" in fighting, as all successful leaders do, and when the end justified the means he took the risk. The delay imposed by his cautious instructions resulted in the following note from Ashby:

"Camp Evans, November 4, 1861.

"Secretary of War:

"The Potomac is higher than it has been since 1852. It is over the canal bank. The boating is probably over for the season.

"Turner Ashby."





## Chapter V.

### BOLIVAR—CHEW'S BATTERY—DAM NO. 5—BATH—HANCOCK —ROMNEY.

Having received orders to march down the valley, Colonel McDonald, on arriving at Winchester, with a part of the Seventh, marched to the South Branch Valley, and dispatched Ashby to a point on the B. & O. Railroad, half way between Martinsburg and Harper's Ferry, to take up the material of the road. Ashby threw his pickets out about Shepardstown. The destruction of the railroad being completed, he moved his camp near Charlestown. This change of camp was made to meet the enemy concentrating at Harper's Ferry. Ashby, ever on the alert, discovered signs of the enemy's advance. He decided to strike the first blow, though his little force of cavalry and militia, badly equipped, were much inferior to his opponents. This affair can best be told in one of the few reports he made during the

war. Modest men usually do justice to everybody but themselves, as in this instance:

“Camp Evans, Halltown, Va.,

“Oct. 17, 1861.

“My dear Sir:

“I herewith submit the result of an engagement had with the enemy on yesterday at Bolivar Hill. The enemy occupying that position for several days, had been committing depredations into the vicinity of the camp. Having at my disposal three hundred militia armed with flint lock muskets and two companies of cavalry, Turner's and Mason's of Colonel McDonald's regiment, I wrote to General Evans to co-operate with me, taking position on Loudoun Heights and thereby prevent reinforcements from below, and at the same time to drive them out of the ferry where they were under cover in the buildings. On the evening of the 15th I was re-enforced by two companies of Colonel McDonald's regiment (Captain Wingfield), fully armed with minie rifles and mounted, Captain Miller's about thirty men mounted, the balance on foot and with flint lock guns. I had

one rifled four-pound gun and one twenty-four-pound gun badly mounted which broke an axle in Bolivar, and I had to spike it. My force on the morning of the attack consisted of 300 militia, part of two regiments commanded by Colonel Albert of Shenandoah and Major Finter of Page. I had 180 of Colonel McDonald's Cavalry (Captain Henderson's men) under command of Lieut. Glynn; Captain Baylor's mounted militia, Captain Hess, about 25 men.

"The rifled gun was under command of Captain Averitt, the 24-pound gun under command of Captain Comfield. I made the attack in three divisions and drove the enemy from their breastworks without the loss of a man, and took position upon the hill, driving the enemy as far as Lower Bolivar. The large gun broke down and this materially affected the result. The detachment from the large gun was transferred to the rifled piece, and Captain Averitt was sent to Loudoun Heights with a message to Colonel Griffin. The enemy now formed and charged with shouts and yells, which the militia met like veterans. At this moment I ordered a charge of cavalry, which was handsomely done. Captain Turner's in the lead.

In this charge five of the enemy were killed. After holding this position for four hours the enemy were re-enforced by infantry and artillery, and we fell back in order to the position their pickets occupied in the morning. The position Colonel Griffin held upon Loudoun was such as to be of very little assistance to us, not being so elevated as to prevent them from controlling the crossing. My main force is now at Camp Evans while I hold all of the intermediate ground. The enemy left the ferry last night and encamped on the first plateau on Maryland Heights. My loss was one killed and nine wounded. Report from the ferry states the loss of the enemy at 25 killed and a number wounded. We have two Yankee prisoners and eight Union men co-operating with them. We took a large number of blankets, overcoats, and about a dozen guns. I cannot compliment my officers and men too highly for their gallant bearing during the whole fight, considering the bad arms with which they were supplied and their inexperience.

I cannot impress too forcibly the necessity of the perfect organization of my artillery and the forwarding at a very early day of the other guns

promised. These guns are drawn by horses obtained for the occasion, and are worked by volunteers. We are in want of cavalry arms and long range guns, and would be glad to have an arrangement made to mount my men. I herewith submit Surgeon N. G. West's report, and cannot compliment him too highly, and respectfully submit his name as one worthy of an appointment. He is temporarily employed by me as a surgeon. Casualties, wounded 13.

“Your obedient servant,

“Turner Ashby,

“Lieut.-Col. C. S. Army, comdg. in Jefferson County.

“Hon. Mr. Benjamin, Acting Sec. of War.

“P. S.—I am without ammunition for rifled cannon (4 pounder rifled to Parrott), also without friction primers. I am without a regular quartermaster, and consequently have my movements greatly embarrassed. If I am to continue with this command I would be glad to have the privilege to recommend for appointment, so that I can organize according to what I believe most efficient conditions.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 5, pages 247-8-9.

After this engagement the command returned to Flowing Springs, but Ashby had his wounded sent to Charlestown, where the patriotic citizens and devoted women ministered to their wants and comfort. His men say the night after the fight Ashby also personally looked after the wounded with the gentleness of a woman. As seen from the report of the Secretary of War, Ashby felt the need of and saw the importance of forming a battery of horse artillery to assist his cavalry. While camped at Flowing Springs this opportunity offered itself. R. Preston Chew, a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, at eighteen years of age at the beginning of the war, had been serving up to this time with "Alleghany" Johnson, in Greenbrier County as a lieutenant of artillery. Having received authority from the Secretary of War to organize his Horse Artillery, he was fortunate in forming on the thirteenth day of November, 1861, a battery with R. Preston Chew as Captain, Milton Rouse, First Lieutenant, J. W. McCarty, Second Lieutenant, and James W. Thompson, Second Lieutenant. McCarty, after serving with the battery for some time, resigned and joined the cavalry, and Rouse,

at the reorganization in 1862, was elected lieutenant in Baylor's company.

"Both of these officers served with distinction in the cavalry. John H. Williams and J. W. Carter (Tuck) were then elected lieutenants of Chew's Battery. Captain Chew was promoted in the spring of 1864 to the command of Stuart's Horse Artillery. Thompson was then made Captain, Williams First Lieutenant, and Carter and E. L. Yancey, Second Lieutenants. Major Chew was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel on March 1st, 1865. The Horse Artillery was then reorganized, and Thompson was made major and Carter captain. The reputation of Thompson and Carter is so well known that it is hardly necessary for me to allude to it. They both were dashing officers, bold almost to a fault in fighting their guns, and were highly esteemed for their gallantry and enterprise by all the cavalry commanders with whom they served. Thompson was killed at Highbridge on the 6th of April, 1865."<sup>1</sup>

Chew's Battery organized with three guns, one of them the noted "Blakely," an English gun, and thirty-three men.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter of Colonel Chew, this volume.

“General Ashby, when this battery was organized, insisted on having all the men mounted, and this became the first battery of horse artillery thus organized in the Civil War. My ambition as a commander of artillery was to handle my guns with skill and effect. I had in my battery four of the finest gunners in the army, and I taught them that their object should be to so handle their guns as to drive those of the enemy from their front rather than to engage in spectacular display. I selected them for their coolness, intelligence, and courage, and I can say for them that they rarely failed to drive our opponents from the field.”<sup>1</sup>

The writer has been accurate in giving the organization of this battery, as Chew was the right arm of Ashby as Ashby was of Jackson, and Jackson was of Lee. Ashby from his headquarters at Martinsburg, where General Jackson wished him, so as to be about the center of his long picket line, had charge of dam No. 5, B. & O. Canal.

Here an incident transpired which was characteristic of Ashby. While the workmen were breaking the dam the enemy's sharpshooters had

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<sup>1</sup> Colonel Chew's letter.



become very troublesome. A section of the Rock-bridge Artillery was ordered out to protect volunteer soldiers performing the work. Jackson, Ashby and other officers were watching the effect of the artillery fire. In the meantime the enemy turned their sharpshooters on the officers on the hill. Jackson, seeing that they were drawing the fire on his gunners, suggested the officers retire, and all did so but Ashby. He remained watching and directing the fire of his guns.<sup>1</sup>

This illustrates the heroic character of the man in his remark to Colonel Chew. "He was reckless in the exposure of his person, and when he was cautioned about this he replied, 'That an officer should always go to the front and take risks, in order to keep his men up to the mark.'"

After breaking the dam Ashby returned to his winter quarters at Martinsburg, where he joined the Masonic Order. The following remarkable letter at this early period of the war throws the lime light on the field of war, reflecting the leader of the young men of the South.

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<sup>1</sup> Averitt, page 134.

“Charlestown, Jefferson County, Va.,

“October 24, 1861.

“Hon. R. M. Hunter,

“Secretary of State.

“Dear Sir:

<sup>1</sup> “In consequence of my absence from home it was only last night that I had the honor to receive your letter, and exceedingly regret there is a misconception of our wishes at the War Department in reference to Lieutenant-Colonel Ashby's promotion. Our main object in asking that he be advanced to a full colonelcy is that he may thereby be enabled to organize under him an additional force of several hundred young men who are anxious to be attached to his command, but will not volunteer under another colonel. If they organize under Lieutenant-Colonel Ashby now they will constitute a portion of Colonel McDonald's regiment, and although Lieutenant-Colonel Ashby is at present detached from Colonel McDonald's regiment, he is under his orders, and the young men I speak of wish to be assured that Ashby alone shall command their regiment. The condition of our border is becoming more alarm-

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 5, pages 919-20.

ing every day. No night passes without some infamous outrage upon our loyal citizens. Ashby's force is too small to prevent these things, but if he be made a colonel, and those he has with him now be re-enforced by the volunteers ready to rally to his regiment, I promise you that a better state of things will exist up here. I am reluctant to make suggestions for those who are so much better qualified to conduct affairs, but think it will not be presumptuous in me to say that it would also be well to make Ashby provost marshal for the river counties of Jefferson, Berkeley, and Morgan. These counties are infested with traitors; they cannot be controlled or guarded against unless some one be invested with authority to deal with them as they deserve. They defy all authority now, and are in daily communication with the enemy, as we have every reason to believe. The enemy along the canal has been re-enforced, and yesterday I noticed them building a raft or boat at dam No. 4, and also that coal continues to be sent down the canal. I have just written a letter to the Secretary of War, and hope that you will favor us with your good offices in securing the full colonelcy of Ashby. A part

of his present force is militia, and they are commanded by full colonels who rank Ashby, which makes some difficulty always, and which was the source of serious trouble to Ashby in his fight at Harper's Ferry, Bolivar Heights, on Wednesday last, which I myself had occasion to notice there.

“I am most respectfully,

“Your obedient servant,

“A. R. Boteler.”

General Jackson's objective in this campaign in what is now West Virginia was Romney. He captured Bath and demanded the surrender of Hancock across the Potomac in Maryland. Colonel Ashby,<sup>1</sup> accompanied by Lieutenant Thaddeus Thrasher, Company G, crossed the river on horseback under a flag of truce. They were fired on until midway of the stream, although Thrasher vigorously waved his flag. The enemy finally discovering the flag of truce, ceased firing. When Ashby landed he was blindfolded and led to the commandant, who refused to surrender. Ashby having brought this message back to Jackson, the latter, after some ineffectual shelling, moved to

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<sup>1</sup> J. P. West, Company G.

Unger's store to rest and protect his men and horses from the bitter cold of snow and sleet, before he moved on Romney. Ashby, with a part of his troopers under command of Captains Sheetze and Shands, after a short skirmish, captured Romney on the tenth day of January, 1862. General Loring was left in command of that place by General Jackson. Soon after he evacuated it by permission of the Secretary of War.<sup>1</sup>

The enemy reinvested it and took Morefield and Bloomery Pass, only twenty-one miles from Winchester.

"Soon after the intelligence reached me," says General Jackson, "of the enemy's being in force at Bloomery Pass, I directed Lieutenant-Colonel Ashby of the cavalry to move in that direction with all his available force, which he did with his accustomed promptness, and on the morning of the 16th, after a short skirmish, recovered the position. I am under many obligations to this valuable officer for his untiring zeal and successful efforts in defending this district."

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<sup>1</sup> General Jackson became incensed at this action of the Secretary and General Loring for interfering with his plans, and tendered his resignation conditionally.

During this campaign occurred the following incident relating to Ashby's horsemanship: Bishop Quintard relates the occurrence thus:

"Generals Jackson, Loring, Lieutenant-Colonel Ashby, and the Bishop were riding towards Romney, when they came to a stream on which the ice, though quite strong enough to bear a man, the General thought it might give way under his old sorrel. He accordingly turned up where the crossing was narrower; the others followed him. After going some distance Colonel Ashby remarked to General Jackson: 'General, I will cross here.' And withdrawing a little from the bank he touched his horse with the spur and cleared the stream beautifully."

The Bishop remarked: "So perfect was his seat, and so exactly did his movements coincide with the horse, that the only motion visible in the noble rider was the settling of the folds of his cape as he landed on the opposite bank."<sup>1</sup>

The winter of 1861-2 was not only severe weather, but severe in work on Ashby on his long picket line of 75 or 80 miles on the border. His men report that he would take this line of outposts

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<sup>1</sup> Averitt, page 146-7.



GENERAL T. J. JACKSON

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in a day of twelve or fourteen hours, and the next day would be as fresh as ever.<sup>1</sup>

We see that he was not only the chivalrous leader, but the incarnation of hard work. His life and habits were pure and temperate. He did not use tobacco in any form, and never drank. His official family maintained most pleasant relations with him. At this time they were Major Funston, Surgeons Settle, West, and Burns, Chaplain Averitt, and Adjutant Marshall. In the camp and around the mess table with his body servant George as a waiter, he was the same considerate and generous host as at The Craggs of old. On the march he was the soldier, approachable by all, and knowing each one, many being his neighbors and friends. In battle the pass-word was "follow me," the first to enter and the last to leave.

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<sup>1</sup> J. P. West and A. Rector.



## Chapter VI.

### BUNKER HILL—KERNSTOWN.

The skirmish of Bunker Hill precedes the battle of Kernstown some two weeks. It is given in Ashby's own words. His reports are few, but always brief and terse, indicative of a man of bold and decisive action.

“ Cavalry Camp,  
“ Martinsburg Turnpike, Va.,  
“ March 8, 1862.

“ I have the honor to report the result of a skirmish between Captains S. B. Myers and Koonts' companies with an advancing column of the enemy coming out from Bunker Hill yesterday, brought on by his advance. While Captains Myers and Koonts and myself were visiting the outposts of pickets, upon learning that he was advancing in force, I ordered the two companies up from their rendezvous one mile in our rear, ordering the pickets in charge of Lieutenant Neff to keep him in check as long as possible, which he did most gallantly until these companies arrived, only amounting to forty-five, as many of them were still on duty as pickets. Having or-

dered them to form behind a skirt of timber which reached across the turnpike under charge of Captain Myers, Captain Koonts and myself moved forward to make an observation. When I became satisfied from movements made by the enemy's officers that he had a co-operating force on each flank and was quite strong, which afterwards proved true, as I saw two regiments in column on our left one-half mile from the turnpike, and had reports from scouts of another column on the right. Being, however, confident of being able to elude them at the proper time, I determined to check the column advancing on the turnpike as long as prudent to remain, which I did for more than one hour, as upon every advance he made, my men gave such a galling fire as to drive him back out of sight under the hill, at one time driving him one-fourth of a mile. I did not allow my men to pursue, as I had a position of my choice, and feared in the excitement they might charge to the supporting column of infantry. After the column of infantry upon my left made its appearance double quicking and had passed beyond me about three hundred yards, I ordered my men to fall back slowly, which they did in a walk, turning every time the enemy made a demonstration to

charge and drive them back. In the stand made beyond the turnpike the enemy had three men wounded that I know of, and two horses left on the ground, one wounded (that of an officer). I had one man dangerously wounded. I skirmished before the advancing column for three miles, he throwing shot and shell from two pieces which he had on the turnpike. Upon meeting the companies of cavalry, which I had ordered to reinforce me, I again formed across the road, when the enemy halted, and after a little time returned towards Bunker Hill, near to which place I followed them, they having their encampment three-fourths of a mile this side, their pickets one mile, into which I fired. I am pleased to express my commendation and appreciation of the conduct of Captains S. B. Myers and Koonts, as well as Lieutenants Neff, Clark, and Myers, and also the privates of their companies, who gave evidence of much hope of success to our cause, when the struggle for the valley comes.

“Respectfully, “Turner Ashby,

“Lieut.-Col. Commanding Cavalry.

“George G. Judkin,

Acting Asst. Adj. General.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 5, page 523.

The battle of Kernstown was a stubbornly contested engagement on both sides, and while the numbers engaged were small it had far-reaching results. General Jackson says in his report that, "Owing to the most of our infantry having marched thirty-five and forty miles, since the morning of the previous day, many were left behind. Our number on the evening of the battle was of infantry 3,087, of which 2,742 were engaged, 27 pieces of artillery, of which 18 were engaged. Owing to recent heavy cavalry duty and the extent of the country to be picketed, only 290 of this arm were present to take part in the engagement." <sup>1</sup>

General Shields reports:

"Our force in infantry, cavalry and artillery did not exceed 7,000. \* \* \* Though the battle had been won, still I could not believe that Jackson would have hazarded a decisive engagement at such a distance from the main body without expecting re-enforcements, so to be prepared for such a contingency I set to work during the night to bring together all the troops within my reach. I sent an express after Williams' Division, request-

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 1, page 380.

ing the rear brigade, about twenty miles distant, to march all night and join me in the morning.”<sup>1</sup>

Abstract from “Record of Events” of Williams’ Division, Fifth Army Corps: “March 20th: Division ordered to march with all possible dispatch from Winchester to Centreville. Brigadier-General Williams assumed command. The first brigade marched from Winchester for Manassas on March 22nd. While at Castleman’s Ferry waiting for the Third Brigade to cross the Shenadoah, the brigade in pursuance of a note from Major Copeland, Asst. Adj.-General, counter-marched and returned to Berryville, Va. While encamped at Berryville, in pursuance of a note received from General Shields, commanding at Winchester, requesting brigade to support his command, then warmly engaged with the enemy at Kernstown near Winchester, the brigade marched from Berryville to the field of battle near Middletown, marching thirty-six miles in ten consecutive hours, and re-enforcing General Shields’ command while engaged with the enemy.”<sup>2</sup>

Berryville is only ten miles from Winchester,

<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 1, pages 341, 342.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, page 378.

and Kernstown is only three miles from Winchester. The reader can choose between the deadly parallel of General Shields' report and the "abstract record of events of General Williams' Division."

General Shields seems to be as careless of facts in Virginia as Sherman was of fire in Georgia and South Carolina. Shields had all of 9,000 men engaged at Kernstown, allowing only 2,000 for the re-enforcement of Williams' first brigade. Henderson says "he had at least 9,000," making three to one against Jackson. Yet the fight was only a repulse to Jackson, who, while losing the battle tactically, won it strategically. He had gained his object in preventing the re-enforcements of McClellan from leaving the valley. General Shields having been wounded on the twenty-second of March, General Banks took command on the twenty-fourth. It is not the intention of the writer to either describe the battles or campaigns of Jackson. In going into the figures given the object is to show the dominant part enacted by Ashby in this bloody drama. Opening the battle with Ashby's report, he says:



“Near Woodstock, Va.,

“March 26, 1862.

“In reporting the part performed by the troops under my command in the engagement of Sunday, March 23rd, it is proper to state that four companies of cavalry under Major Funston were by your order (Jackson) sent by me to the extreme left of your line, and acted under your orders directly. Having followed the enemy in his hasty retreat from Strasburg on Saturday evening, I came upon the forces remaining in Winchester within a mile of that place, and became satisfied that he had but four regiments, and learned that they had orders to march in the direction of Harper’s Ferry. On Sunday morning I moved my force of cavalry, battery of three guns, and four companies of infantry under Captain Nadebousch to Kernstown, when after firing a few shots and pressing in the direction of Winchester with the cavalry I learned the enemy was increasing his force and intended to make a stand. He had thrown skirmishers out to threaten my guns, when I ordered Captain Nadeboursch to protect them against him, which he did by driving him from his place in the woods most gal-

lantly; and it was with extreme regret that I found it necessary to order him to fall back, which I did owing to the enemy getting into position upon my left with artillery and infantry to command the position taken by Captain Nadeboursch. Accompanying this is Captain Nadeboursch's report. Upon falling back, which I did for one-fourth of a mile, I received your order to prepare for an advance and learned that your force had arrived. My order being to threaten the front and right, I placed two guns to bear upon the front and one upon his left, where I kept up an incessant fire with some visible effect, gaining ground upon him, when I ordered a charge upon his extreme left, where I drove their advance upon the main line, having one lieutenant (Thaddeus Thrasher) killed, and six privates wounded. We here took six or seven prisoners. The loss of Lieutenant Thrasher is a great one to his company and regiment, as his boldness and efficiency had made their mark in the regiment. One man was taken prisoner upon the left of Captain Turner's company, having been thrown from his horse and ordered to the rear. When the firing ceased at twilight I ordered my guns back to the rear, and

cavalry to cover the flank of Colonel Burk's command coming out in the turnpike, and after they had passed remained at Bartonsville with my companies until two o'clock on Monday morning, when the enemy again advanced cautiously.

“ Respectfully,

“ Turner Ashby,

“ Colonel Commanding Cavalry.”<sup>1</sup>

Endorsements on this report by Ashby show he had not more than one hundred and fifty with him of the cavalry, Major Funston having a hundred and forty. The endorsement also shows:

“ Owing to the arduous duties imposed upon my cavalry companies up to the time the enemy left Strasburg upon his retreat to Winchester, I started in pursuit with one company (Captain Sheetze) with orders for Captains Bowen and Turner to come on during the night.”<sup>2</sup>

A fine thing is related to the writer as an incident of the battle of Kernstown.<sup>3</sup> Just before Ashby made his main charge with cavalry that

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 1, page 385.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, page 386.

<sup>3</sup> J. P. West.

day, a lieutenant of Company G, the Maryland Company of the command, flushed a fox and dashed after it across field and fence until he ran it almost into the Federal lines. They, appreciating the humor and gallantry of the action, refused to fire on him, and cheered him lustily. Wheeling and riding back to his command, he met Ashby forming for the charge. He said to Ashby: "Colonel, let me make this fight. I have been over the ground." Lieutenant Thaddeus Thrasher led this charge, and Ashby in his report, regrets the great loss of this dashing Marylander.

General Jackson, in his official report, says of this campaign, relative to Ashby:

"On the preceding Friday evening a dispatch was received from Colonel Turner Ashby, commanding the cavalry, stating that the enemy had evacuated Strasburg. Apprehensive that the Federals would leave this military district, I determined to follow them with all my available force. Ashby with his cavalry and Chew's battery was already in front.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Leaving Colonel Ashby with his command

on the valley turnpike with Colonel Burk's brigade a support for his batteries, and also to act as a reserve, I moved \* \* \* to our left for the purpose of securing a commanding position on the enemy's right.

\* \* \* \* \*

"During the engagement Colonel Ashby, with a portion of his command, including Chew's battery, which rendered valuable service, remained on our right, and not only protected our rear in the vicinity of the valley turnpike, but also served to threaten the enemy's front and left. Colonel Ashby fully sustained his deservedly high reputation by the able manner in which he discharged the important trust confided to him.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Leaving Ashby in front, the remainder of my command fell back to its wagons and bivouacked for the night."<sup>1</sup>

Colonel Preston Chew, who was with Ashby from the fall of 1861 to his death, a trained soldier and commanding his artillery, and an able

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 1, pages 380-1-2-3.

authority, says in his letter to the writer, which is made a part of this sketch:

“You can glance over the letter in Averitt’s book and you will find among other things an allusion to the battle of Kernstown, where fully alive to the great necessity of defending Jackson’s right flank, and keeping the valley pike clear, he displayed a skill as remarkable as ever Forrest did on any battlefield.

“I have always believed his audacity saved General Jackson’s army from total destruction at the battle of Kernstown. Ashby moved boldly forward with his command, consisting of a few companies of cavalry and my three guns, and protecting his men from observation by woods and ravines, opened on them with artillery, and withstood from ten o’clock until dark the fire of the enemy’s artillery, sometimes as many as three or four batteries. When the enemy moved forward he dashed upon and repulsed them with his cavalry. Had the enemy known our strength or not been deceived by the audacity of the movement they could have swept forward upon the turnpike, turned Jackson’s right flank and cut off his retreat by way of the turnpike. They, however,

made little effort to advance, and we remained in our position until Jackson had returned to Newtown.”<sup>1</sup>

Colonel Chew, at the age of twenty-two years, commanded all the horse artillery in the Army of Northern Virginia.<sup>2</sup> No greater tribute could be paid to his worth than such high rank, and his opinions and judgment are well worth careful consideration. If the reader will consider his comparison of Ashby with Forrest it will be seen how great the compliment is to Ashby. Ashby developed his fame and genius the first year of the war, and was a brigadier-general while Forrest was still commanding a regiment. Colonel Chew compares Ashby at the start with Forrest at his best. It has been said by the historians of the battle of Kernstown that Ashby made a mistake for once in the information he gave General Jackson, that the Federal forces were withdrawing from the valley, and hence Jackson's defeat at Kernstown. The writer is so fortunate as to give for the first time in print one of the sources of this information on which General Ash-

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<sup>1</sup> Colonel Chew's letter, Averitt, pages 272-3.

<sup>2</sup> Official Records.

by reported the movements of the enemy on the eve of the battle of Kernstown. Colonel Jonah Tavener, an elderly gentleman of Loudoun County, Virginia, too old to be in the army, told the writer and many others soon after the war that he was on his way to the valley from Loudoun, and after he had passed over the Blue Ridge Mountain he saw a large body of Federal infantry coming from Winchester to Castleman's Ferry. He evaded the Federal army and flanked Winchester to the south and soon struck Ashby's outposts. He asked to be taken at once to Ashby, whom he knew well personally, and reported what he had just seen. Ashby sent him with a messenger at once to Jackson, to whom he reported the same facts. In the abstract from the "Record of Events" quoted in this chapter, Williams marched from Winchester for Manassas on the twenty-second of March, and while waiting at Castleman's Ferry for the Third Brigade to cross the Shenandoah, the First Brigade was ordered back to Berryville, and from there, on General Shields' dispatch, made a forced march to Kernstown and participated in the fight. Colonel Tavener proves that Ashby had this information,



and both Ashby and Tavenor are borne out by the United States Government reports. These reinforcements decided the day against Jackson's over-marched and hard fought veterans, and General Garnett without ammunition was compelled to fall back. General Jackson was so much incensed at Garnett's withdrawal that he had him tried by a court martial. General Dabney Maury, in his "Reminiscences of the War," states that General Garnett was unanimously acquitted by the court. After the charge had been made by General Jackson, he says that General Garnett refused to defend himself, saying he would "stand or fall on General Jackson's statement," or words to that effect. General Jackson says he did not intend to offer battle the afternoon of the twenty-third, but finding his men in good spirits, determined to strike at once. The hind sights would indicate, that if he had waited until the morning of the twenty-fourth Williams' Division would have been over the Blue Ridge in Loudoun on the twenty-third and too far to come to the assistance of Shields. General Ashby at the beginning of the war had two magnificent horses, a

black and a white. The black horse was not tractable and somewhat vicious, and could only be controlled by himself. The white was the famous Telegraph stock, splendid in form and action, responding to every touch of his master's hand. At Kernstown, mounted on this white charger, he was not only the beau ideal of the army, but the centaur of the South.

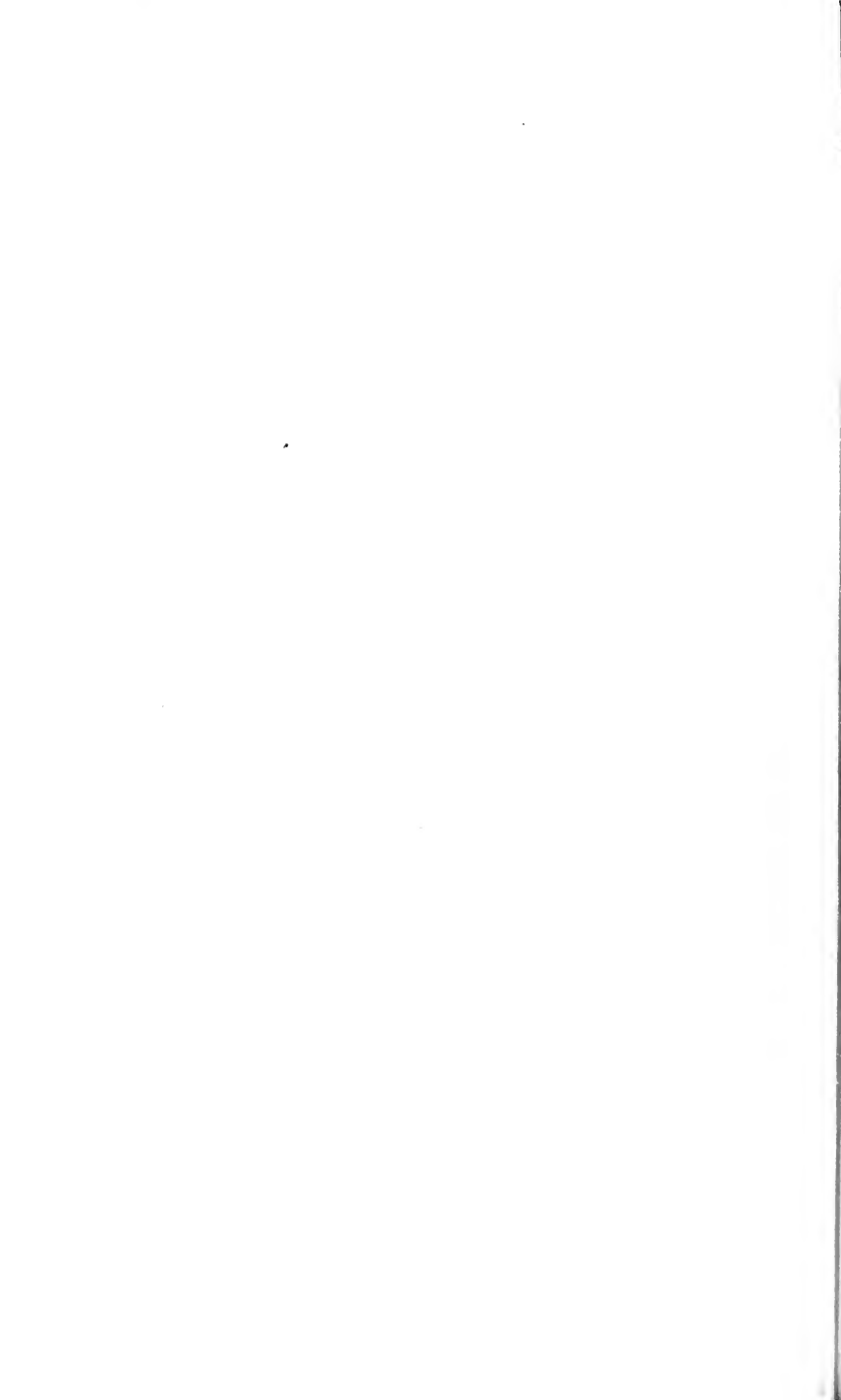
“Nor was his reputation confined to the Confederate ranks. ‘I think our men,’ says a Federal officer, ‘had a kind of admiration for him as he sat upon his horse and let them pepper away at him as if he enjoyed it.’ Bold enterprises were succeeded by others yet more bold, and to use the words of a gentleman, who, although he was a veteran of four years service, was but nineteen years of age when Richmond fell, ‘we thought no more of riding through the enemy’s bivouacs than of riding around our father’s farm. So congenial were the duties of the cavalry, so attractive the life and associations, that it was no rare thing for a Virginia gentleman to resign a commission in another arm in order to join his friends and kinsmen as a private in Ashby’s ranks.’ ‘As cavalry,’

says one of Banks' brigadiers, 'Ashby's men were greatly superior to ours.' ”<sup>1</sup>

The battle of Kernstown closed with the object of Jackson accomplished, and Ashby's fame gleaming near its end but nearer the stars.

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<sup>1</sup> Henderson, Vol. 1, pages 223 4-5.



## Chapter VII.

### RETREAT FROM KERNSTOWN— ASHBY'S RESIGNATION —McDOWELL.

Monday morning, the twenty-fourth of March, 1862, Shields' army advanced cautiously, with Banks in supreme command. Ashby and Chew's battery, disputing every foot of the ground, gave Jackson and his foot-sore veterans time to slowly fall back. Shields' army did not press the retreat, and this not being Ashby's method of fighting, he would wheel Chew's battery on hill tops and wake the enemy up with the bark of his "Blakeley," the celebrated English gun, "noted for its accuracy of fire and explosion of shell." After the lagging advance of the enemy had been gingered by the "Blakeley," and the Federal cavalry showed up, Ashby turned his squadrons loose in the hurly burly of the charge. This was magnificent, but it was war, too. It made the advance of the enemy still more cautious, giving the infantry more time to rest and Jackson more time to reorganize his shattered columns. A strange thing occurred on this retreat, and strange-

ly, too, fulfilling the prophecy of the Hon. A. R. Boteler, quoted in his letter in one of the earlier chapters of this sketch. Ashby's horse was more than doubled by volunteer recruits. Advancing and victorious armies have been recruited, but never before did a retreating army draw like the leadership of Ashby—more than doubling his original command. Ashby's twelve companies were increased to 26 companies. About this time the gallant Captain Thomas Marshall<sup>1</sup> joined the command. Afterwards he was promoted to Major and Lieutenant-Colonel of the Seventh Regiment. He was killed later in the war, but not until he had left the influence of a noble Christian character impressed upon his regiment.

Captain T. B. Massie<sup>2</sup> brought in his company, principally mounted at his own expense, and afterwards became Lieutenant-Colonel of the 12th Regiment. This is the same officer, who in the fall of 1861 assisted Ashby at Bolivar Heights with a militia company, and acted, it is said, with marked gallantry on that occasion, as later at the fight of Trevillians. General Hampton at Trevillians reports that, "Lieutenant-

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<sup>1</sup> Averitt, page 170.

<sup>2</sup> Averitt, page 169.

Colonel Massie of the 12th Regiment was wounded while gallantly leading his men over the enemy's works." The bold Captains Willis from Rappahannock and Harness of Hardy joined Ashby here;<sup>1</sup> and so the good work went on under the crack of the Colts and the roar of the guns. While Ashby was picketing on the retreat an incident transpired worth relating. It is given by Captain Randolph. "The firing had become quite heavy and the minie balls were whistling right and left. The place indeed was a hot one, when Captain John Henderson, then disabled and off duty, rode up to where Colonel Ashby was sitting on his horse watching the skirmishers. "Good morning, Colonel," said Henderson, "I have brought you some breakfast, but this is rather a warm place to enjoy it." "Never mind that," said Ashby, "your kindness is well timed, for I am very hungry." Henderson handed him some hard boiled eggs. Thanking him, the Colonel turned and shared them with him. Then throwing his leg over the pommel of the saddle soon dispatched his share of the breakfast. I

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<sup>1</sup> Averitt, page 169.

waited some time before I could enjoy my part of it. After he had finished the Colonel rode rapidly towards the turnpike, and soon the peculiar booming of the little Blakeley told that hot work was on hand.”<sup>1</sup>

A quotation from a gallant infantry officer of the Second Virginia Regiment, Stonewall Brigade, will show how the infantry felt, with Ashby commanding the rear guard. This officer being an old and valued friend of the writer, they have often talked war. He has repeatedly said: “That he never felt safer in his own home in times of peace than when Ashby was between his regiment and the enemy. That it was about impossible to surprise him.” Colonel Allen says of this officer, then adjutant of his regiment, in his official report on the battle of Kernstown: “Adjutant Hunter, R. W., remained mounted during the day, near me, and maintained the position of the line by coolness and courage.” He was later in the war promoted to major on General J. B. Gordon’s staff as Adjutant-General. In crossing the bridge on the north branch of the Shenandoah, Ashby ordered a guard to dismount and burn it.

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<sup>1</sup> Averitt, page 172.



The enemy perceiving his object, charged and drove off the guard. Ashby then stopped to burn it himself, when four of the enemy charged him, shooting his horse and demanding his surrender. Refusing to surrender, although his pistols were empty, fortunately at this instant, Harry Hatcher of Company A dashed up and shot one; Captain Koonts, one; a dismounted man, a third, and the fourth ran off. Harry Hatcher was a brother of Lieutenant-Colonel Dan Hatcher, who commanded at one time Ashby's old Company A, and rose to be Lieutenant-Colonel of the Seventh Virginia. They were both dashing soldiers. Jackson reached Harrisonburg on the nineteenth day of April, and, the enemy still following him, he left the turnpike, struck into the mountains, through the gaps, rested in the valley of Elk Run near Swift Run Gap in the Blue Ridge. Being in the position of his choice, he could rest and reorganize his little band, or, if pressed too hard, could fall back through the gap to the Confederate forces connecting with Richmond. Banks, by Ashby's vigilance, seems to have "lost" Jackson, after he could not find him on the Valley turnpike, and stopped his pursuit. Whilst rest-

ing here, Ashby had his second fight with his friends. We have seen the first was with General J. E. Johnston in the summer of 1861, and how he won that fight. We will now see a harder contest than the first, how the country gentleman, without military education, except in the camp and on the battlefields, deported himself. The historians of Jackson, Dabney, Cooke, and Henderson, have misrepresented Ashby in the matter of his resignation. The Rev. Mr. Averitt has reported the facts correctly, but as United States war records were not published in 1867, the official records were not then accessible and have here for the first time been presented in this connection. Dr. Dabney, Cooke, and Henderson all say that Ashby "threatened" to resign, placing him in the light of a sulky boy, lacking the courage to be man enough to complete the threat by actual resignation. There is no excuse for Dr. Dabney, as he was Jackson's Adjutant-General, and, therefore, had the opportunity to know all about it. There is more excuse for Cooke, as he probably followed Dabney, and was not on the ground. There is still less excuse for Henderson, because he had the official records now be-

fore the writer, and quotes from them throughout his life of Jackson. In developing Ashby's resignation there is also developed the greatest evidence of his brilliant career. Here follows the record:

“ Headquarters Valley District,,

“ Staunton, May 5, 1862.

“ W. H. Taylor, A. A. G.,

“ Sir:—Your letter of the 16th ultimo did not reach me until the 2nd instant. Pressure of business, I regret to say, has prevented an earlier answer. I so felt the importance of having the cavalry of this district more thoroughly organized, drilled, and disciplined as to induce me to take action in the matter; but Colonel Ashby claimed I could not interfere with his organization, as he was acting under the instruction of the late Secretary of War, Mr. Benjamin. These instructions or authority are contained in letters written on the 21st and 22nd of February last, and authorized Colonel Ashby to raise cavalry, infantry, and heavy artillery. Copies of these letters have been forwarded to the War Department, accompanied with the endorsed communication from

Colonel Ashby and my remarks thereon. Colonel Ashby and Major Funston are the only field officers belonging to the cavalry under Colonel Ashby. Colonel Ashby reports that there has never been any regimental organization of any part of his command. When I took steps for organizing, drilling, and disciplining the cavalry both of its field officers sent in their resignations, and such was Colonel Ashby's influence over his command that I became well satisfied that if I persisted in my attempt to increase the efficiency of the cavalry it would produce the contrary effect, as Colonel Ashby's influence, who is very popular with his men, would be thrown against me. Under these circumstances I refrained taking further action in the matter (as I was in the face of the enemy) until the War Department should have an opportunity of acting in the case. Colonel Ashby reports 21 companies of cavalry, but he includes a number of men who re-enlisted from the infantry with an understanding that they should serve with the cavalry, but I have uniformly prohibited such re-enlistments, as it is important that men should continue in that arm in which they have been serving. At present there is no field officer

on duty with the cavalry referred to, as Colonel Ashby and Major Funston are both sick. It is important that the cavalry should be organized into regiments at the earliest practicable moment.

“I am sir,

“Your obedient servant,

“T. J. Jackson,

“Major-General.”<sup>1</sup>

(Endorsement)

“Richmond, May 7, 1862. Respectfully referred to the Secretary of War with the request that explicit instructions be given in reference to the command of Colonel Ashby, and its organization. I did not know before that Colonel Ashby's command embraced more than cavalry, which I have been endeavoring to get organized and instructed.

“R. E. Lee, General.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 3, page 880.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

The writer is fortunate again in throwing the calcium light of living testimony on what General Jackson meant by "organizing, drilling, and disciplining" Ashby's command. Dr. Thomas L. Settle, a surgeon on his staff and a life-time friend, says in his letter in this sketch:

\* \* \* "Ashby tendered his resignation before the Banks' campaign. We were encamped near Conrad's store on the east bank of the south branch of the Shenandoah, where the road crosses the Blue Ridge through Swift Run Gap, Ewell coming over the mountain at this point to reinforce Jackson. Ashby was quartered near the river, Jackson between Ashby and the mountain. One morning, I think to the best of my recollection it was in April just before Jackson moved against Milroy at McDowell, Ashby received the order to divide his command, he to retain command of one-half and Major Funston to command the other half, and to report for duty to General Winder, the other to General Taliaferro. I remember he, Ashby, was very indignant and said General Jackson was overstepping his authority; that he, Ashby, had obtained from the War Department authority to organize his com-

mand, and he would not submit to such treatment, and if they were of equal rank he would challenge Jackson. Though he estimated him as a good man and a very valuable servant to the C. S. A., "but before I will tamely submit I will tender my resignation, and it will be necessary to forward through General Jackson as my chief." It happened that the writer of this was the bearer of the resignation to General Jackson's quarters. On reaching General Jackson's quarters I met the late H. Kyd Douglass, a member of General Jackson's staff, delivered the document and said I expected to return in about an hour (Dr. T. was visiting a sick soldier beyond Jackson's headquarters) and would call for the reply. When I got back Major Douglass informed me there was no answer. The next day Generals Winder and Talliaferro came down to Ashby's quarters, spent the greater part of the day and the matter was amicably and satisfactorily adjusted."

General Jackson after this also sent for General Ashby, and had a personal interview with him, which is related by his chief of artillery. Colonel Chew speaks to the point on Ashby's resignation in his letter: "About Ashby's resignation, after

he tendered his resignation, Jackson sent for him. This occurred at Conrad's store. On his return, I with several of his officers was on the porch, and when he came up he told us what had occurred, and my recollection of it is as follows: When he met Jackson, Jackson asked him to withdraw his resignation, and told him what reasons had influenced him, Jackson, in withdrawing his resignation when the Secretary of War sent an order over his head to Loring to fall back from Romney. Ashby told him he had tendered his resignation in earnest and wanted it forwarded to the Secretary of War, and but for the fact that he had the highest respect for Jackson's ability as a soldier, and believed him essential to the cause of the South, he would hold him to a personal account for the indignity he had put upon him. He then turned and went out of the tent. He said his purpose was to organize an independent command and operate in the lower valley and the Piedmont country. All of the officers present declared their intention to go with him. Jackson restored the command to him and all went smoothly from that time."

It will be seen that Dr. Settle speaks of Ashby





COLONEL R. PRESTON CHEW



before he carried his resignation, and Colonel Chew after he had resigned, and after his interview with Jackson. Colonel Chew's reference to Ashby forming an independent command meant of course if his resignation had been accepted, thereby taking his command from him, but, as we have seen, his command was restored to him immediately, thereby closing the incident. In further evidence of the fact that this was what General Jackson did do, the following order is given from "Ashby and his Compeers," the author of which was Ashby's chaplain, and on the ground at the time, the Rev. Mr. Averitt:

"Headquarters, Army Valley.

"The General Commanding:

"Hereby orders companies A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K of Ashby's cavalry to report to Brigadier-General Talliaferro and to be attached to his command; the other companies of the same command will report to Brigadier-General Winder to be attached to his command. Colonel Turner Ashby will command the advance guard of the Army of the Valley when on an advance, and the rear guard when in retreat, applying to Gen-

erals Talliaferro and Winder for troops whenever they may be needed.

“By order of Major-General T. J. Jackson.”

It will be noticed in the first place in the communication of General Jackson of May 5th to General Lee, that General Jackson did not explain to Lee that he had taken Ashby's command from him in order to “organize, drill, and discipline” it. In the next place, we find in General Jackson's letter that he refrained taking further action, etc., owing to his, Ashby's, influence with his men. The next day Ashby rode his usual wearisome picket line as if nothing had occurred. His conduct in this affair was one of noble hauteur. General Ashby treated General Jackson in the same manner that General Jackson treated the Secretary of War a short time before when the Secretary interfered with his orders with General Loring at Romney, but with this difference: Jackson tendered his resignation conditionally, as quoted in a previous chapter from his official report; Ashby actually resigned. We see now how Ashby won his second fight with his friends. In passing from this incident the attention of the

reader is called especially to the instructions or authority referred to in General Jackson's letter to General Lee conferring on General Ashby the power to raise cavalry, infantry, and heavy artillery, which will be discussed in another chapter. General Banks still supinely lagged in Harrisonburg, because Ashby would not permit him to find Jackson. It is easy to understand why Ashby had not organized and drilled his command, when one reads his busy life from the eighteenth day of April, 1861, at Harper's Ferry, to his death. The business of his life was in "the horrid front of war." Night and day it was along the picket line, a skirmish or a battle. He and his men lived in the saddle. The only local habitat he ever had was in front of Banks before he retreated down the valley. Lieutenant-Colonel Chew speaks on this point, and the reader can see whether he or his command had any rest then: "At Edinburg, where the two armies confronted each other, for thirty days his cavalry dismounted and our three guns were almost constantly engaged for twenty-eight days. He had at that time twenty-six companies of cavalry. General Jones said the Seventh Virginia Cavalry had the finest

lot of company officers of any regiment he ever saw. Ashby had planned a regimental organization, and selected his field officers when the controversy between General Jackson and himself occurred. Ashby's cavalry were picketed from Franklin to the country east of the Blue Ridge Mountains."

Further, more than half of Ashby's horse had only joined him on the retreat from Kernstown, and had been with him less than thirty days when General Jackson attempted to organize, drill, and discipline them, by taking them from his command. General Jackson passed over the Blue Ridge Mountains, and swinging around through Albemarle County left General Ewell in Swift Run Gap to bar the passage of Banks if necessary. General Jackson's objective was to make connection with General Edward Johnston, who was watching General Milroy approaching from the west. Ashby so completely masked this movement from Banks that he seemed as ignorant of it as an unborn fledgling. This was done too with only a part of his command. He himself remaining to shell Banks and hold his attention while he sent several squadrons to act as the eyes

and ears of Jackson. At McDowell, Jackson and Johnston met Milroy in a fierce bout for hours, repulsing him, and the next day Milroy did not take water, but to the woods, burning them as he retreated to obscure and shield his retreat. Jackson finding he could not pursue Milroy successfully returned to Harrisonburg. Banks still having lost Jackson began to fear that his communications might be destroyed, and acting on this idea fell back to New Market. This shows how completely Ashby threw dust in his eyes. Ashby pressed closely on the heels of Banks down the valley some twenty miles before he halted at Woodstock. Still, "like a wolf on the fold," Ashby hung on Banks' rear until he pulled up at Strasburg parallel to the northwest end of the Massanutten Mountains, where he threw up fortifications. From this point Banks threw out on his left flank two detachments of troops, one near Front Royal and the other at Buckton Station on the Manassas Gap Railroad.





## Chapter VIII.

### FRONT ROYAL—BUCKTON STATION.

The location of the opposing forces at this time was, Jackson at Harrisonburg, Ewell in Swift Run Gap, Banks at Strasburg, fortified. Ashby, with a part of his command, in Banks' front, with his pickets and companies extending from Franklin, east of the Blue Ridge, and scouting for Ewell.<sup>1</sup>

Before going down the Luray Valley, we will see how Jackson had to literally break away from General J. E. Johnston, his immediate commander, by appealing to General Lee, who ranked Johnston, for permission to make this campaign, the most brilliant and crowning glory of his career. General Johnston writes General Ewell, May 17, 1862: "If Banks is fortifying near Strasburg the attack will be too hazardous. In such an event we must leave him in his works. General Jackson can observe him and you can come eastward.

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Letter from Ewell to Ashby.

\* \* \* We want troops here (Richmond), none, therefore, must keep away unless employing a greatly superior force of the enemy. \* \* \* My general idea is to gather here (Richmond) all the troops who do not keep away from McClellan, greatly superior forces." General Johnston adds in a postscript: "After reading this, send it to General Jackson, for whom it is intended as well as yourself." <sup>1</sup>

General Ewell, it is reported, took the note in person to General Jackson for his, Ewell's, protection, and got General Jackson to endorse his orders on the note, as they were contrary to the orders received from General Johnston.

(Endorsement)

"Major-General Ewell:

"Suspend the execution of the order for returning to the east until I receive an answer to my telegram.

"Respectfully,

"T. J. Jackson, Major-General."

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 3, pages 896-7.

“ May 20, 1862.

“ General R. E. Lee:

“ I am of opinion that an attempt should be made to defeat Banks, but under the instructions just received from General Johnston I do not feel at liberty to make an attack. Please answer by telegraph at once.” <sup>1</sup>

The telegram to Lee was in accordance with Lee's and Jackson's original plan as early as the preceding April. Before General Johnston, on the seventeenth of May, had ordered Ewell to come eastward, General Lee, on the sixteenth of May, directed General Jackson as follows:

“ Whatever movement you make against Banks do it speedily, and if successful drive him back toward the Potomac and create the impression as far as practicable that you design threatening that line.” <sup>2</sup>

On April 25, 1862, General Lee directed Jackson: “ The blow, wherever struck,” referring either to Banks or at Warrenton, “ must, to

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 3, page 898.

<sup>2</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 3, pages 892-3.

be successful, be sudden and heavy, the troops must be efficient and light.”<sup>1</sup>

General Jackson, having received General Lee’s sanction to move on Banks in answer to his telegram, and having put his own division on the march, wrote to Ewell:

“ On the road to Newtown,

“ May 24, 1862, 5.45 p. m.

“ Major-General Ewell:

“ Major-General Jackson requests that you will at once move with all your force on Winchester.  
\* \* \*

“ Respectfully,

“ R. L. Dabney.”

The eagles have started at last to strike Banks and baptize him in the blood of his men with a new name, “ Jackson’s Quartermaster and Commissary General.” At the beginning of this campaign, the Sixth Virginia Cavalry and the Second, commanded respectively by Colonel Stanhope Fournoy and Thomas Mumford, joined General

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 3, page 866.

Ewell under Jackson. They were cordially welcomed by Jackson's and Ashby's men. Ashby's command had been worked hard, man and horse, all the year, and they rejoiced at the addition of these two fine regiments, which were well drilled and equipped. They were under the command of General George H. Steuart of Maryland. They had served under the dashing Jeb Stuart and their metal was worthy of their leader. They will be heard from later, as they came under the command of Ashby at the request of both of their Colonels. The upheaval of nature has thrown out between the Blue Ridge and the North Mountains the beautiful Massanutton range, some forty or fifty miles long, with but one gap diagonally opposite from Luray in the Luray Valley, and New Market in the Shenandoah Valley. The Massanutton Mountain became the natural shield for Jackson and Ashby to play their tactical game of hide and seek on the Federal commanders. Ashby at the beginning of the advance was watching Banks at Strasburg.

After an interview with General Ewell, his second in command of the infantry, a stubborn and brilliant fighter, Jackson pushed his army

down towards the Potomac, and having been re-enforced by that other splendid fighter, General Dick Taylor, a part of Ewell's command, crossed the Massanutton by the gap to Luray. That night Jackson completed his juncture with the remainder of Ewell's division. The combined force marched on towards Front Royal. Colonel Ashby's orders led him to the northwest and then across the south bank of the Shenandoah, leading to Buckton Station on the Manassas Gap Railroad. Passing around the northeast end of the Massanutton Mountain in the direction of Strasburg, he left a cordon of pickets to observe that place, and pushed on to Buckton Station, where Banks had a detachment of infantry quartered in the depot and another house. He immediately reconnoitered the enemy's position and as immediately charged it. The first dash not being successful, he charged again and drove the enemy from the depot, destroyed it filled with stores, and cut the telegraph wires. The infantry, having retreated, took shelter behind the railroad embankment and kept up a galling fire. Ashby, realizing it would not do to leave the enemy in the rear of Jackson, put himself at the head of his column and

ordered his men to follow him, and made a desperate onslaught. He is said to have longed then for the little "Blakeley." In this sharp affair he lost two of his best officers and most gallant soldiers, Captains Sheetz and Fletcher. Captain John Fletcher of Loudoun County is well remembered by the writer. He was one of the original members of Ashby's old volunteer company, and had served with distinction from the John Brown raid up to his death. Harry Hatcher of Company A and — Inskip of Company F were wounded. It is recalled that this old Company A of the Seventh produced many officers from its ranks—five or six captains, who at different times commanded the company, double that number of lieutenants, a major, lieutenant-colonel, colonel, and brigadier-general. It furnished also two gallant captains and one lieutenant to Colonel Mosby's battalion.<sup>1</sup> This section of Virginia, parts of Loudoun and Fauquier, was the center of Mosby's confederacy. Colonel John S. Mosby was a famous commander and leader of a famous battalion. He and his bold riders not only made

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<sup>1</sup> Captain J. W. Foster, Captain Alfred Glascock and Lieutenant Harry Hatcher.

history, but it is estimated that he prevented the juncture of Sheridan with Grant for some six months. At Buckton Station took place a desperate hand-to-hand encounter between two members of Company A of the Seventh and five Yankees. Harry Hatcher, as he was leaving the field, was challenged by five of the enemy, infantry. He charged them at once. W. A. Brent, having been unhorsed and his pistol lost, ran to Harry's assistance. Just as he reached the melee one of the Yankees pierced Hatcher with a bayonet, and the next instant Billy Brent struck the Yankee with his sabre. Brent, believing Hatcher had been killed, determined to kill his man. The other Yankees fell back so that Brent and his man had it out. Brent having "the bulge," left the Yankee for dead on the field. Harry Hatcher said Billy Brent saved his life, and that he was always hunting the fight and was the "bravest of the brave." Billy Brent said this was the bravest act he had witnessed during the war, when Hatcher could have ridden off, but instead charged five of the enemy, single handed, without knowing there was any assistance at hand.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Friends of the writer, to whom both related the incident.



Ashby, taking his dead and wounded with him, returned in the direction of Front Royal, where another brilliant charge was made by the Sixth Virginia Cavalry, under the eye and by the direction of General Jackson himself. The quotation on this charge is made from his official report.

“Delayed by the difficulties at the bridge over the North Fork, which the Federals had made an effort to burn, Colonel Flournoy pushed on with Companies A, B, E, and K of the Sixth Virginia Cavalry, and came up with a body of the enemy near Cedarville, about five miles from Front Royal. This Federal force consisted of two companies of cavalry, two pieces of artillery, the First Federal Regiment of Maryland Infantry, and two companies of Pennsylvania Infantry, which had been posted there to check our pursuit. Dashing into the midst of them, Captain Grimsley of Company B in the advance, the four companies drove the Federals from their position, who soon, however, reformed in an orchard on the right of the turnpike, where a second gallant and decisive charge being made upon them, the enemy's cavalry was put to flight, the artillery abandoned, and the infantry now thrown into great

confusion surrendered themselves as prisoners of war. In this successful pursuit our loss was twenty-six killed and wounded. Among the killed was Captain Baxter of Company K, while gallantly leading his men in the charge.”<sup>1</sup> The writer having friends and relatives in the Sixth and Seventh Virginia Cavalry, frequently quotes from them in this sketch. In this charge, described by General Jackson, near Front Royal, a mere boy charged with the foremost. He had entered the Confederate Army, Sixth Virginia Cavalry, Company A, the spring before, at the age of fifteen years. Colonel Fields, commanding the Sixth at that time, directed Captain R. H. Dulaney of Company A to send him home as being too small for the service, but the boy, J. W. Peake (Tip), begged to stay, and through the intercession of his captain he was allowed to do so.<sup>2</sup>

In this remarkable charge were so many gallant fellows who the writer knew, that he wishes he could mention more of them. He cannot omit,

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 1, page 702.

<sup>2</sup> Being too small to draw a man's saber, Captain Dulaney presented him with a light one.

however, a running reference to Bowls Armistead and W. B. Sowers of Company A of the Sixth, and Frank R. Carter and Virgil Weaver of Company H. Besides, we like to mention the privates. General Lee said that the heroes of the Lost Cause were found in the ranks. Bowls Armistead, a brother of General Lewis A. Armistead, was elected Lieutenant of Company A, and after the cool, bold Captain Bruce Gibson was captured at Yellow Tavern, Lieutenant Armistead was acting captain until the close of the war. Later in the war, about Winchester, Lieutenant Armistead was knighted on the field of battle by a dashing general officer <sup>1</sup> for specially gallant conduct. He dashed up to Armistead and struck him over the shoulder with his sword and said, "I make you a captain upon the field." W. B. Sowers, of the same company, in the charge at Front Royal, was a noted scout of intrepid courage and coolness. The writer has seen him within two hundred yards of a company of Federal cavalry, stop and count them while they were shooting at him. When urged to ride off he

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<sup>1</sup> General W. H. Payne of the cavalry.

would smile and reply, "I want to know their number." This occurred in the streets of Upper-ville. Two more fighting men of the Sixth Virginia, well known to the writer, were Frank R. Carter and Virgil Weaver, ever ready for the fray. Weaver became Captain of Company H, and as he entered the battle of Spotsylvania, said to his friend Carter, "Ride with me, I will be killed today; I feel it." This presentiment was fulfilled. Captain Weaver was mortally wounded and died in a few hours. His dying request was that Carter be made captain of his company. Captain R. H. Dulaney of Company A of the Sixth Virginia, commanding his company in the fight at Front Royal, after the death of Ashby, was first made Lieutenant-Colonel of the Seventh, and later Colonel. He was badly shot several times, and was a bold fighter, commanding that intrepid regiment. Ashby at Buckton Station and Flournoy at Front Royal waked Banks up from his slumber behind his fortifications at Strasburg. Front Royal had bold riders with Ashby and gallant sons in the Warren Rifles of the splendid Seventeenth Virginia Infantry of Picket's Division.

Ashby's cordon of pickets had completely fooled Banks again, as when he "lost" Jackson at Harrisonburg, he had now as suddenly found him.



## Chapter IX.

### BANKS' RETREAT—WINCHESTER.

General Banks, realizing there was "something doing," began a first-class sprinter before Ashby's Horse, Chew's Battery, and Dick Taylor's Louisianians. The pell mell of that foot race would defy the pen of "Bull Run Russell" at first Manassas. At Middletown Ashby struck the main part of the flying cavalry, wagons, etc. Here also Ashby dashed ahead of his men on his black charger, and wheeling in the midst of the enemy calling on them to surrender, which they did in scores. This is the testimony of participants who were eye witnesses. Near here, before the retreat became general, Ashby directed Chew to take his guns and charge abreast with the cavalry. Let's hear Colonel Chew on this novelty in war, inaugurated by an untrained soldier:

"When Jackson moved down the Luray Valley and reached Cedarville he directed Ashby to move on Middletown. Funston was sent on with the bulk of the cavalry he had with him to New-

town to intercept the retreating forces of the enemy. Ashby marched rapidly toward Middletown with a small body of cavalry and two guns of Chew's, and two guns of Proague's Battery (Rockbridge), followed at a distance by the infantry, and ordering the men to follow him as swiftly as possible he charged the enemy with the guns, the cavalry, artillery and all moving together. We unlimbered within a few hundred feet of the Federal troops. Ashby with his men charged up to the stone fence with the cavalry and emptied their pistols into the retreating columns. The same day near Christman's house he did the same thing, charging the enemy with forty or fifty cavalry and Chew's Battery. This manoeuver of charging with the horse artillery was often employed afterward, but was first inaugurated by Ashby in his campaign of 1862."

Singular, that this country gentleman of Virginia gives to the world this new idea of destruction ahead of the West Pointers. Singular, too, that they should adopt it as most effective, and yet call Ashby only a partisan officer. General Jackson halting a short while at Middletown, made his disposition of the infantry to guard him-



self against any force of the enemy that might have been left behind him. Finding nothing to apprehend from this quarter, he proceeded towards Winchester and formed a complete connection with Ewell near that place, to complete the destruction or panic of Banks. Ashby, with Chew's Battery, pressing the main body of the enemy on the turnpike, found they had unlimbered some guns at Newtown, and checked for the moment the southern advance. Chew's guns were placed in position, when he had a hot duel with those of the enemy. As these were protected by their sharpshooters, Proague's Battery re-enforced Chew's. Ashby seeing his men suffering from the fire of the sharpshooters, ordered his artillery to stop firing, and placing himself at the head of his cavalry, charged with the fury of the tempest, for quick work was required, and dispersed the sharpshooters. The horse artillery and cavalry swept the enemy like a feather blown in a storm past Kernstown to the environs of Winchester. Then darkness fell upon the red carnival of death, shielding Banks from the Eagle of "The Crag." General Ewell, converging on Winchester from the Front Royal road, formed

his line of battle on both sides of the road, connecting his left with Jackson's right, with the Sixth and Second Virginia Cavalry under General George H. Stuart. Half of Ashby's cavalry had been sent, as we have seen, to Generals Jackson and Edward Johnston, where they repulsed Milroy at McDowell, and had been kept detached as guards and pickets at various points ever since. Ashby and the remainder of his cavalry were under spur, masking the McDowell movement from Banks at Strasburg. With the two previous days fighting and marching at Buckton Station and Middletown, many casualties occurred to man and horse, so that after the night of the twenty-fourth of May there could not in the nature of things have been many of his men fit for duty on the twenty-fifth, the morning of the battle of Winchester. The charge against Ashby's men is, that they "looted" the captured stores, and against him, that, on the morning of the twenty-fifth, he struck out on an "independent enterprise." The charges are first made by Dr. Dabney, and followed by Cooke and Henderson. The living witnesses will be put upon the stand first. Colonel Chew, speaking of this independ-

ent movement "at the battle of Winchester, a statement made by Dabney and followed by other historians, including Henderson," says: "I know that on that occasion Ashby was with the army immediately in front of Winchester, and when we were in pursuit of Banks on the Martinsburg road, was in our front dashing on the enemy with a small force, probably forty or fifty cavalymen. He did not have a large force of cavalry with him on this expedition. Funston had several hundred men who had become scattered, and the bulk of Ashby's cavalry were picketed from Franklin to the country east of the Blue Ridge Mountains."

Major Carter in his letter, made a part of this sketch, says, "that at Middletown his men 'stopped and went to looting' has no sort of foundation. In fact I was in position to know all that transpired, and certainly saw nothing of the sort."

Dr. N. G. West, surgeon on Ashby's staff, in his letter, says he never heard of Ashby's men looting on Banks' retreat.

We quote now from one of Ashby's splendid fighting privates on the looting and the independ-

ent enterprise, J. P. West: "There is not a word of truth in either charge." Another gallant private, Abner Rector, says: "It is a slander and no truth in either statement." Dr. Settle, of Ashby's staff, says, that he never heard of the charge. Much more of the same testimony could be supplied, as the writer never saw one of Ashby's officers or men who did not deny both charges indignantly. Now, let's put General Jackson on the stand. After reflecting upon the conduct of the cavalry and the infantry under Colonel Ashby's command, in the "running fight," he says: "That gallant officer had to discontinue further pursuit." General Jackson, before he closes this report, takes "everies" on his previous statement, evidently made to him by some one else, and states: "While I have had to speak of some of our troops in disparaging terms, yet it is my gratifying privilege to say of the main body of the army that its officers and men acted in a manner worthy of the great cause for which they were contending, and to add that, so far as my knowledge extends, the battle of Winchester was, on our part, a battle without a straggler."<sup>1</sup> This proves that

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 1, page 709.

somebody else had so reported to him, but that he was not willing to have his report say he was a witness of it. Further, this same report disproves Ashby's independent enterprise, first stated by Dabney and followed by Henderson and Cooke. General Jackson says: "Upon inquiring of General Ashby, I asked him why he was not where I desired him at the close of the engagement. He stated that he had moved to the enemy's left for the purpose of cutting off a portion of his force."<sup>1</sup>

This was satisfactory to General Jackson, as his next sentence relates to General George H. Steuart. If General Jackson was satisfied with General Ashby's movements on that occasion, why should Dr. Dabney criticise his action as an "independent enterprise," and not be satisfied, too? Nobody knew better than General Jackson that Ashby's flank movement on a fleeing army was correct. Why, if Ashby was not satisfactory to Jackson, was it that only two days afterwards in Winchester, on the twenty-seventh of May, 1862, he had Captain Sandy Pendleton,<sup>2</sup> his aid then, afterwards his Adjutant-

<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 1, page 707.

<sup>2</sup> Averitt, page 206.

General, hand Ashby his commission of Brigadier-General, and at the same time caution him to be less reckless of his life?

In this instance of over zealous friendship of Dr. Dabney for General Jackson, the old adage is illustrated, "Save me from my friends and I will take care of my enemies." There is no other way to view this matter without placing General Jackson in the peculiar position of condemning his cavalry chief one day and promoting him the next. This proposition is too preposterous for any man living to believe. As we leave these ridiculous charges absolutely refuted by Ashby's and Jackson's best officers and men, with General Jackson himself disproving one charge and casting doubt on the other, by stating he did not witness it, the writer says to the reader if he still entertains doubts, he believes in the "stuff that dreams are made of."

So much has been said about Ashby and his command we will now turn to General George H. Stuart's command of the Sixth and Second Virginia Cavalry, and see what General Jackson says about him at this time:

\* \* \* "The Second and Sixth Virginia Regiments of Cavalry were under the command of

Brigadier-General George H. Steuart of Ewell's command. After the pursuit had been continued some distance beyond town (Winchester) and seeing nothing of the cavalry,<sup>1</sup> I dispatched my aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Pendleton, to General Steuart with an order 'to move as rapidly as possible and join me on the Martinsburg turnpike, and carry on the pursuit of the enemy with vigor.' His reply was that he was under command of General Ewell and the order must come through him. Such conduct and consequent delay has induced me to require of Lieutenant (now Major) Pendleton a full statement of the case, which is forwarded herewith." \* \* \*

Major Pendleton's endorsement is as follows:

(Endorsement)

\* \* \* \* \*

"I found the cavalry some two and a half miles from Winchester on the Berryville road with the men dismounted and the horses grazing quietly in a clover field. Not seeing General Steuart, I gave the order direct to the Colonels of the regiments to mount and go rapidly forward to join

<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 1, page 706.

General Jackson on the Martinsburg road. Colonel Flournoy of the Sixth Virginia Cavalry, the senior colonel, requested me to ride on and overtake General Steuart and communicate the order to him, as he had directed him to await him there. Going some half a mile further, I overtook General Stuart and directed him by General Jackson's order to move as rapidly as possible to join him on the Martinsburg turnpike and carry on the pursuit of the enemy with vigor. He replied that he was under the command of General Ewell and the order must come through him. I answered that the order from General Jackson for him to join him (General Jackson) was peremptory and immediate, and that I would go forward and inform General Ewell that the cavalry was sent off. I left him and went on some two miles and communicated with General Ewell, who seemed surprised that General Steuart had not gone immediately upon receipt of the order. Returning about a mile I found that instead of taking the cavalry, General Steuart had ridden slowly after me towards General Ewell. I told him I had seen General Ewell and brought the order from him for the cavalry to go to General Jackson. This



satisfied him. He rode back to his command, had the men mounted and formed and moved off towards Stephenson's depot.

“ Respectfully,

“ A. S. Pendleton,

“ Maj. and A. A. General.” <sup>1</sup>

General Steuart was from Maryland, and General Jackson says in his report he was temporarily in command of cavalry. A little later we will see why he was put back in the infantry. After Steuart arrived at Bunker Hill, where he found General Ashby in pursuit of the enemy, they followed him on to Martinsburg and thence on to the Potomac. It is not germane to enter into the infantry battle of Winchester. It was a “ continuous ” fight, as General Jackson reports: “ The advance continuing to move on until morning.”

\* \* \* Generals Ewell, Taylor, Winder, Trimble, all made spirited attacks, and Banks retreated through Winchester to and across the Potomac.

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 1, pages 709-10.



## Chapter X.

### JACKSON'S RETREAT.

Immediately after the capture of Winchester, General Jackson ordered divine service held for his army. Quaint genius of war, from battle to his knees and from his knees to battle. Ashby, too, followed the Divine Cross as he did the Southern cross. The one he worshiped like a knight where the guns flashed, the other in the recess of his closet. General Jackson was not satisfied with defeating General Banks and driving him across the Potomac. He wished to capture or destroy his whole army. This has never been done in an open country, where the opposing forces are about equal. To accomplish such results there must be a complete investment of a besieged place or a large reserve of fresh troops in the open field operations. Ashby's cavalry could have done no more than they did, fought and worn out as they were. The infantry did all that foot cavalry could do, foot-sore and shot out as they were. There is no necessity for the his-

torians to seek a scapegoat in this running and continuous fight. It was splendidly done, and accomplished all that General Lee expected. The only delay that was avoidable was caused by General George H. Steuart's waiting, as we have seen, for his orders to come through General Ewell. This was for a few hours, and we see from Jackson's report that, after he started, he gave a good account of himself, with the Second and Sixth Virginia Cavalry, on the Martinsburg road to the Potomac. Military men claim that no battle of proportions was ever executed as planned. In other words, that strategy and tactics rarely ever coincide. Mr. Davis, the great and lofty President of the Confederacy, in his "Rise and Fall of the Confederacy," says the battle of Shiloh was executed as planned by General Albert Sidney Johnston up to the moment of his death, and if the writer's memory is not at fault, he says this is the only battle of which he has cognizance where this can be said. General Lee, as we have seen, authorized General Jackson to make his campaign down the valley and drive Banks to the Potomac, "and threaten that line." At the same time he notified the Secretary of War

that <sup>1</sup> General Jackson was a good soldier, and he expected him to succeed. It was after Jackson had executed this brilliant movement, after the whole valley campaign, that Jackson said of Lee: "He is a phenomenon, he is the only man I would follow blindfold." Later at Chancellorsville, in regret for Jackson's fall, Lee said, "I have lost my right arm." Jackson now completed the instructions of Lee and the strategy of both, by sending General Winder with the infantry, supported by Ewell's reserve, towards Charlestown, and driving back the Federals to Halltown. General Steuart, with Cols. Munford and Flournoy, threatened the enemy on to Harper's Ferry. In the meantime Shields was marching <sup>2</sup> from Fredericksburg, Va., on Jackson's right, and Fremont from the South Branch on his left, with the view of concentrating the two forces in his rear, cutting off his retreat up the valley. If this could be accomplished by the Federal commanders, Jackson could render no assistance in the defense of Richmond before McClellan, and would himself be "bagged."

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Valley Campaign, 1862.

<sup>2</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 1, page 707.

These operations will explain why this retreat of Jackson's was pressed much harder than his first retreat after the battle of Kernstown. This compelled General Jackson to call in his troops to Winchester, General Winder being farthest off bringing up the rear. Ashby, now promoted to the rank of Brigadier-General by General Jackson, arrived in Winchester on the thirtieth day of May, 1862, and was directed to take the Front Royal road, to watch and delay Shields. This was the last time that Ashby would ever look upon the "dear familiar faces" of that devoted town, which for three years became a "bastion fringed with fire." Her brave sons were equalled by her noble daughters. Here, filling a twin sepulchre, the Centaur and his brother "sleep their glorious manhood away" in ground enchanted by their deeds of heroic chivalry. Another division of the Federal army which went to the valley to bag Jackson, as they said, was "Blinker's Dutch," as they were universally called. They were the most despicable set of ruffians that ever plundered a civilized people or disgraced the uniform of any army. A parallel can only be found in the march of the Goths and Vandals during the waning

period of the Roman empire. This division, or part of it, passed through Upperville, en route for the valley to "bag Jackson." Their only instinct was to pillage from non-combatants and their highest virtue was cowardice in the presence of the enemy. They could speak nothing but Dutch and obeyed orders only by the whack of the officers' swords. They overran the grounds and houses like a swarm of locusts, stealing every chicken and pig and, thrusting their hands in the jars of soft soap, called out hooney! hooney! A northern correspondent on this trip with the Federal army thus refers in part to Blinker's Division: \* \* \* "With all respect to General Blinker himself, whom I highly esteem as a German and a gentleman, it comprises as lawless a set as ever pillaged hen roofs or robbed dairy maids of milk and butter. I saw a company of them gutting the cellar of a house, carrying off everything eatable and drinkable, \* \* \* and their only reply was 'nix furstay.'" <sup>1</sup>

In Upperville when they were asked, "Why are you stealing the chickens?" they answered, "To bag Jackson." Why do you eat soft soap?

<sup>1</sup> Cooke, page 157.

Answer, "Hooney." "Why do you kill the pigs?" Answer, "Nix furstay." "Why do you rummage the bureau drawers?" Answer, "To bag Jackson." "To bag Jackson" was their shibboleth. The only English they knew was comprised in three words: "Bag Jackson," and "Honey," which they pronounced "hooney."<sup>1</sup> How completely they fooled the hard fighter, General Shields, will be seen in his reference here quoted: \* \* \* "The ten thousand Germans on his rear (Jackson's) who hang on like bull dogs."<sup>2</sup> It will soon be discovered after Ashby and General Dick Taylor, that General E. V. Sumner of the Federal Army had a more just conception of the German bull dogs than General Shields.

"Warrenton Junction,

"March 31, 1862, P. M.

"General S. Williams:

"I would respectfully ask to be informed what I am to understand by the withdrawal of the two principal divisions from my corps and leaving me

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<sup>1</sup> Writer eye witness and many others.

<sup>2</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 3, page 352.



the German Division only, which in my opinion is the least effective division in the whole army.<sup>1</sup>

“E. V. Sumner,  
“Brigadier-General U. S. Army,  
“Commanding 2nd Corps.”

Ashby at Cedar Creek, with only a part of his command, held these German bull dogs, then under Fremont, to bag Jackson, a whole day, before they could pluck up courage enough to strike Jackson while he was waiting for Winder with the Stonewall Brigade to come up. The next day they made a feeble attack. General Taylor under General Ewell, supporting Ashby, says of these German bull dogs:<sup>2</sup>

“Sheep would have made as much resistance as we met. Men decamped without firing and threw down their arms and surrendered. Our whole skirmish line was advancing briskly. I sought Ewell and reported we had a fine game before us and the temptation to play it was great, but Jackson’s orders were imperative and wise. He had his stores to save, Shields to guard against,

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<sup>1</sup> O. R.

<sup>2</sup> Destruction and Reconstruction.

Lee's grand strategy to promote, he could not waste time on chasing Fremont."

Ewell and Ashby, having been recalled from chasing the German bull dogs, Jackson retreated on up the valley with Ashby and Chew's battery, disputing from the hill tops every step of the way. The failure of Shields to appear at Strasburg looked as if he were racing up the Luray Valley to cut off Jackson at New Market. This was a matter of vital importance to Jackson, and the only way to equal or overcome it was race for race with Shields, with the Massanutton Mountain between them. This retreat on Jackson's part, and advance on Fremont's and Shields', was compelled to be a hot one for either side to gain its objective. Ashby, holding Cedar Creek the first day, keeping Fremont from coming into the valley turnpike, and taking position before Jackson's infantry arrived, was the first point gained by Jackson. The bridges over Massanutton Mountain must be destroyed, to delay Shields. This he does, the White House and Columbia on the south branch of the Shenandoah. Later the bridge at Conrad's store is also destroyed. This heavy work done, Shields is

balked and delayed. Quoting again from Colonel Chew's letter at this time, he says: "When it was necessary to delay the enemy, who were pressing after Jackson in his retreat from Winchester where he had defeated Banks he displayed great skill and stubbornness in fighting from every hill top. He would form a skirmish line and open upon them with artillery, compel them to halt and form line of battle, and when their superior forces drew dangerously near to his men he would skillfully withdraw and form on the next hill. I have seen General Ashby under fire in fully a hundred battles and skirmishes, and he always appeared to me to be absolutely without consciousness of danger, cool and self-possessed and ever alert, and quick as lightning to take advantage of any mistake of the enemy. He was always vigilant and remarkably sagacious in discovering the erroneous movement on the part of the enemy. He was with our guns when we were fighting from hill to hill. Upon several occasions I suggested to him we were lavish in the expenditure of our ammunition, but he said he believed in firing at the enemy whenever they showed their heads. He was reckless in the exposure of his person, and when

he was cautioned about this replied, that an officer should always go to the front and take risks in order to keep his men up to the mark."

Jackson was heavy laden with Commissary-General Banks' rich stores and supplies, wagons and prisoners, and his own wounded to care for. He had now come up with this impedimenta, and his retreat had to correspond to it; thus was produced the necessity for heavy and skilful rear-guard fighting of Ashby, graphically described by Colonel Chew, his chief of horse artillery. Jackson had his plans well laid, but it took a bold and skillful soldier like Ashby to execute them. Each bridge must be burnt at the right time and not before. His picket lines extended for fifty miles on each side of the Massanutton Mountain, including the gaps. Shields must be watched night and day, and we have seen how Fremont had to be fought every hour. "Fortune smiles upon the bold suitor." Jackson had him in the leader of his horse, horse artillery, and infantry whenever occasion required, as Ashby had from the beginning of the war, as we have seen, commanded all these arms of the service. The history of the Southern army will fail to show that any other

volunteer captain had command of all arms as did Ashby from the first day of the war.

After Jackson had united his forces about Strasburg and falling back on Woodstock on the valley turnpike, Ashby and his men were relieved temporarily of the heavy rear-guard fighting. This rest was absolutely necessary for man and horse. General George H. Steuart was placed in command of the rear guard with the Second and Sixth Virginia Cavalry, commanded by Colonels Munford and Flournoy.



## Chapter XI.

### RETREAT CONTINUED.

The enemy, pressing Jackson, as his only hope to delay him was to cause him to turn and fight with his infantry, made a very gallant charge soon after General Steuart was put in command of the rear guard. The two colonels commanding under General Steuart, as we have seen, were Flournoy and Munford, both gallant officers, commanding gallant men. Colonel Munford has this to say in his official report, of the enemy's charge on the rear guard:

\* \* \* \* \*

"The next morning (June 2nd) found us still covering the retreat. \* \* \* My regiment was then thrown to the right and rear of Caskie's battery, on the left of the road coming up the valley, one company acting on my flank. Here the enemy opened a battery and shelled us furiously, and I was ordered by General Steuart to move back out of range, and crossed with my command on the other side of the turnpike to sup-

port a battery there in position, which would check the enemy while Caskie's battery was retiring. In executing the order, after we had gone but a few hundred yards, to my utter surprise, I saw the battery and cavalry teeming together down the road pell mell, and the Yankees after them at full speed. The head of my column was under a hill, and as we came out of the woods a party of the 42nd Virginia Infantry, mistaking us for the Yankees, fired into my advance squadron, causing a stampede, wounding several. The Yankees passing on my rear captured eight men. Such management I never saw before. Had the batteries retired by echelon, and the cavalry in the same way, we could have held our position or driven back their cavalry by a counter charge from ours, but a retreat was ordered, and a disgraceful stampede ensued. Mortified and annoyed at such management, Colonel Flournoy of the Sixth accompanied me to see General Ewell, who was kind enough to intercede with General Jackson and have us at once transferred to General Ashby's command. Here the gallant Ashby succeeded in rallying about fifty straggling infantry and poured a volley into the Yankee cavalry emptying many



saddles and giving them a check, clearing the road for the rest of the day. Ashby's cavalry, the Sixth and a portion of the Second, were all equally stampeded." <sup>1</sup>

Ashby and his cavalry were not on duty at this time. This is also indicated by Colonel Munford in the beginning of his report by the use of the word "us." They were only marching along, taking a much needed rest, and the charge into them was unexpected. General George H. Steuart had the rear guard, with two crack regiments; yet they let the charging squadron of the enemy pass clear over them to the straggling infantry. There must be a reason for these regiments becoming so stampeded. Colonel Munford gives it correctly as "mismanagement." General Steuart was transferred from the cavalry at once, and was placed in command of infantry. General Jackson states he was only temporarily in charge of the cavalry. Ashby of course was put in command of the rear guard immediately, with the Second and Sixth attached, and made a part of his command at the request of Colonels Munford and Flournoy. Such mishaps as this

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 1, page 731.

never occurred with Ashby. All effects have causes, whether known or not. In war the main factor is the "leader" of men. Napoleon dwells much on this proposition, that it is the commander who makes the army. The writer never realized the truth of this idea so fully, until he had studied the campaigns of Lee, Jackson, and Ashby. The case under discussion illustrates Napoleon's proposition perfectly, though of course in a meagre manner. The Sixth Virginia only about a week before had whipped three or four times their own number, and the enemy fought with cavalry, infantry, and artillery. So the kernel of the matter for Jackson's success is still more clearly proven, that the leader, Ashby, was the actor, around and in whom centered the power to fulfill Jackson's plans. With Ashby in command, the footsore infantry took the rout step, and marched at will. With Ashby absent for a few hours, the rear guard is broken pell mell, and the infantry must close ranks and do battle. This even has to be done by the quick eye and command of Ashby. These were the days when the true hero made war glorious. It was not like the murder and sudden death of the late Japanese-Russian con-



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flict. That was smokeless science applied by the hand of fatalism without a gleam of chivalry to brighten the gloom. It was not like the opera play, running for the summer months of 1898, and entitled, "Benevolent Assimilation in Cuba." That side performance produced more pinch-beck heroes in a few months than the Civil War did real heroes in four years, with almost three million and a half of soldiers engaged. Of course that war developed some heroic spirits, as all wars do: Admirals Dewey, Schley, Captain Clark, Hobson and his men, and a few others of the Navy; Fighting Joe, General Wheeler, and a few others of the Army unrecognized. But from 1861-5 the South had grown a crop of men never equalled by herself before or since, and never equalled by any other people. It was the reflex action of her great civilization. Riding now with Ashby on the milk white horse he seems all but resistless, as from flash of pistol and roar of gun he teaches Fremont the lesson of caution. Again Jackson, with his slow-moving, heavy load of commissaries, wagons, and prisoners, captured from Banks, must not be stopped. From every stream, every fence, every hill and bend of the

road the guns belched, the squadrons clashed in responsive uproar like the angry thunder of mountain torrents upon the summer air. Jackson is approaching a vital point on his retreat. He has the Mount Jackson bridge to cross, and his progress grows slower as his impedimenta and troops are more massed to make the passage. It is doubtful if Jackson, without the large stores and supplies taken from Banks on his advance to and at Winchester, could have made this retreat, pressed by Fremont as he was, from Cedar Creek successfully. The captured stores furnished his army with every possible need and even with luxuries. Without these provisions it would have been compelled to forage, and therefore greatly delayed. As it was, with the utmost Ashby could do, Jackson only arrived in time to make his dispositions for Shields at Port Republic, and for Fremont at Cross Keys. The Valley of Virginia had been overrun by friend and foe, at this early stage of the struggle, from McDowell to Harper's Ferry. Her bosom was already hoof-beaten and bleeding, but she held a leal heart, ready for any fate. Later, in the scourge of Sheridan, though she passed under the rod, she bore her brow like a

royal queen, and wept only because "her children were not." In this besom of ruin, that swept her life, no mark was upon the lintel, as a saving grace from death. All the rich life, not ruthlessly snatched from her, she immolated upon the altar of her love, the Southern Cause.

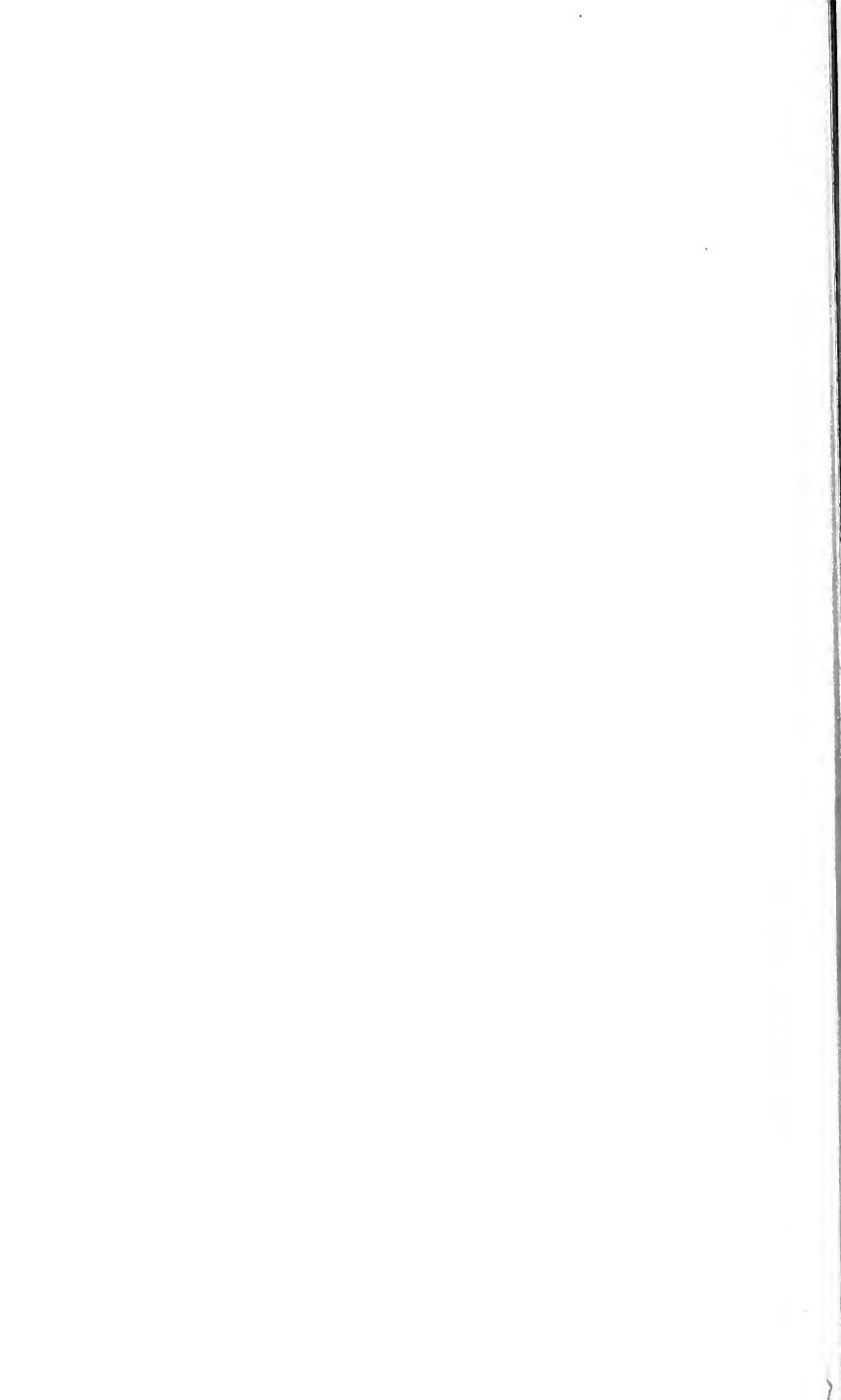
"A land without ruins is a land without memories. A land without memories is a land without history. \* \* \* Crowns of roses fade, crowns of thorns endure. Calvaries and crucifixions take deepest hold of humanity. The triumphs of might are transient. They pass and are forgotten. The sufferings of right are graven deepest on the chronicles of nations."

The war of 1861-5 is the most momentous event of modern history, notwithstanding the Japanese-Russian killing. The pension roll of the government is larger many times than that of any other people or kingdom of the world. This feature, as one result of the war, is well illustrated by an anecdote told the writer some years ago by a friend in Washington City. This gentleman was in the Federal Army and bears an honorable wound for gallant service. He said a foreigner, visiting Washington, after looking over the various

show-buildings and places, including the parks and circles, asked, "But where are the statues of your great generals?" The gentleman being questioned replied that he did not understand him. The foreigner said, "I mean Lee, Jackson, and the other great leaders." "Oh," the American replied, "I will show you their monument." After walking some distance they reached Judiciary Square. "There," said the American, "is their monument, the 'Pension Bureau.'" If the reader asks why these reflections are injected here, the answer is easy. All the progressive diseases that afflict the country today have grown directly or indirectly out of the war. The centralization of Federal power, the centralization of the dollar, both private and corporate; trusts, the industrial offspring bred from the highest tariff ever known, the lowering of the standard of morals, public and private, and, last but not least, the race question, sprung from the reconstruction Acts of Congress. What was to be expected after these acts but the deluge? The deluge of destruction, and it is the deluge still, not alone affecting the South, but more and more, year by year, the whole country. What is the use of talking about the Constitution,



when we govern with one hand colonies without representation like a kingdom; and with the other, turn the pages of the Constitution from which to quote, like Satan from the Bible, to deny and belittle? If the question is, "What is the Constitution between friends," what possible chance has it with its enemies?



## Chapter XII.

### RETREAT CONTINUED.

After Ashby had repulsed the charge of the Federal cavalry on the infantry, with the infantry, wherever the men could see him they cheered him until out of sight. As he rides along the outposts on the white stallion near New Market, commanding all the cavalry, let's observe him closely since he is marked so soon for glory and for death. Complexion, dark; height, about five feet ten inches; weight, about a hundred and forty-five pounds, with plume, saber and sash. As you look at the man and steed you realize that you behold the most perfect horsemanship that nature and art create. You also see that the noble rider and horse are friends. A little more than a year gone he was a volunteer soldier, without rank. He has cut from the "grim visaged" front of war three stars, the rank of a general officer, but you do not see them. Modest, yes; gentle, yes; you see the man first, then the soldier. How is he different from all the others? In the roar of the guns and

the hiss of the bullets, your question is answered: Ashby's genius is thought in action! Colonel R. B. Macy, Chief of Staff of Cavalry, with General Fremont, at this time says of Ashby: "I have been in advance with my regiment most of the time from Strasburg, and the horse of General Ashby is a familiar object to us all, as he daily superintends the movements of Jackson's rear guard. As we see him on the outposts he affords an excellent mark for our flying artillery, as he is described upon the hill in advance of us, seemingly never out of sight or absent from his post of duty. He is always the last man to move on, after satisfying himself as to the movements of our forces. Many and many a time on this advance I have seen the rifled field piece brought to bear upon him, and the solid shot go shrieking after him, striking within a few feet of him, throwing up the clouds of dust over him, or else go singing over his head, dealing destruction to his men behind him."<sup>1</sup>

Pity it is that he did not bear a charmed life a little longer. In a war like ours it was impossible that a man like Ashby could live. It is strange

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<sup>1</sup> Averitt, 214.

that he was not killed earlier. General Shields reports on this campaign: \* \* \* "He (Jackson) crosses and burns the bridges after him. Ashby has infernal activity and ingenuity in this way." <sup>1</sup>

General Shields was an officer of ability and a hard fighter, and having suffered so much in the Luray Valley from Ashby's "ingenuity and infernal activity," his Irish broke out into infernal to relieve his indignation. General Fremont is so impressed with Ashby's rear guard defense that he exclaims: \* \* \* "General Ashby, who up to this time (his death) had covered their retreat with admirable audacity and skill." <sup>2</sup>

In another chapter it will be shown what the admirable audacity and skill meant not only to Fremont but to Jackson in completing his brilliant coupe in pursuance of Lee's grand strategy. Shields was urging forward General Carroll, commanding his advance brigade up to the Luray Valley to intercept Jackson at New Market by a pass in the Massanutton Mountain nearly opposite to New Market. Fremont was hotly pursuing

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 3, page 359.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, Series 1, Vol. 12, part 1, page 18.

Jackson's rear near Mount Jackson to hold him until Shields could reach New Market. If this could be accomplished Jackson would be "between the upper and nether mill stone." Ashby checkmated both the Federal commanders by his "infernal activity and ingenuity" with Shields, and his "admirable audacity and skill" with Fremont. Ashby, as we have noticed, had destroyed the White House and Columbia bridges at the start of this retreat, so Shields was balked in the pursuit of his prey at New Market. He had also delayed the advance of Fremont, by burning the bridge near Mount Jackson, under a heavy fire at the risk of his life. The destruction of this bridge proved to be the crisis in Jackson's final operations. By reference to the report of Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Karges, commanding the First New Jersey Cavalry, Colonel Sir Percy Wyndham's regiment, we see how long General Fremont was delayed in crossing the Shenandoah River, owing to the destruction of Mount Jackson bridge.

\* \* \* "Two miles this side of Mount Jackson the regiment received your orders to advance, the First Pennsylvania Cavalry leading the van,

in order to save the bridge over the Shenandoah, which was on fire. We arrived just in time to behold the smoldering timbers of the bridge. \* \* \* The bridge having been burned and the stream swollen by washout rains, we encamped on the banks waiting for the construction of a pontoon bridge, which, after the delay of forty-eight hours, was effected and the army crossed over on Thursday, June 5th.”<sup>1</sup>

This delay of two days is supported by General Jackson's Official Report:

“On the third, after my command had crossed the bridge over the Shenandoah near Mount Jackson, General Ashby was ordered to destroy it, which he barely succeeded in accomplishing before the Federal forces reached the opposite bank of the river. Here his horse was killed by the enemy, and he made a very narrow escape with his life.” \* \* \*<sup>2</sup>

In passing from this incident now we will only glance at the difficulty of performing the order and its consequences. This was a very difficult task to perform, owing to “heavy

<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 1, page 679.

<sup>2</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 1, page 712.

storms of rain " the preceding days, and to the fact that Fremont had realized that Jackson's forced marches meant to fight either himself or Shields in detail, or, passing through Brown's gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains to connect with Lee's right flank at Richmond. Either result would defeat the cherished plans at Washington, and give him a black eye, from which he knew he could not recover, and from which he did not recover. The game was eluding him, and the last chance was to save the bridge, but the audacious and skilful Ashby also knew Jackson's success depended upon the destruction of the bridge. He remained to the last, seeing that the fire had done its work so completely that Fremont must make a pontoon before he could cross with his army. The evidences on both sides of the Shenandoah at the bridge told of the hot work about it. Here Ashby lost his matchless white horse.<sup>1</sup> A word about this noted horse, as the fame of rider and steed had been won together:

" A ball had pierced his side, and the blood

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<sup>1</sup> Presented to Ashby by Mr. James Henry Hathaway, of Fauquier County, Va.



was gushing out at every pant. As he was led away along a line of a regiment under arms (infantry), an eye witness declares that he never had imagined so spirited and magnificent an animal. He was white as snow, says our authority, except where his side and legs were stained with his own blood. His mane and tail were long and flowing, his eye and action evinced distinctly the rage with which he regarded the injury he had received. He trod the earth with the grandeur of a wounded lion, and every soldier looked upon him with sympathy and admiration. He had saved his master at the cost of his own life. He almost seemed conscious of his own achievement, and only to regret death because his own injuries were unavenged.”<sup>1</sup>

Ashby is said to have caressed with a lingering touch and look his wounded friend, as he turned from him. Did fate cast her shadow three days ahead of time? If so, it was but for a moment, as his guns soon roared defiance across the river. It was two days before Fremont crossed the river, from the third to the fifth of June. He did not

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<sup>1</sup> Cooke, pages 127-8 and note.

come in contact with the Confederate rear guard that day, the 5th. The topography of the country was favorable to sudden onslaughts, and he seemed to know that the tiger's claws were ready to strike any moment. This was verified on the next day, as soon as the enemy showed their heads. General Jackson, during the delay of Fremont's force in crossing the Shenandoah, ordered his prisoners, stores not needed, and his wounded sent on to Staunton out of reach of all accidents.

Ashby, by his last ingenuity and activity, had given "Stonewall" just the time he needed to prepare his army for emergencies. Ashby, slowly falling back beyond Harrisonburg, halted for the night in a meadow near that town. No soldier knew better than he that the silence of the dying day portended the storm of the next. He had felt the pulse of Fremont so often, and it must be confessed at times very rudely, that he knew his respiration and metal. It is said that Ashby was restless this last night, while his men slept. Was he evolving his two most brilliant movements of the next day, or "did coming events cast their

shadows before them?" We can never know, but we do know that the next day, Ashby was Ashby, equal to all emergencies, the dominant power behind Jackson, and rising superior to every demand, but death!



## Chapter XIII.

### LAST BIVOUAC—SIR PERCY WYNDHAM—BUCKTAILS.

Ashby was not only the rear guard of Jackson's army, but, with the Sixth and Second Virginia Cavalry, was guarding and watching Shields' advance over the Massanutton Mountain in the Luray Valley, as he moved on Port Republic. Shields, from his report, had his army scattered for miles along that valley, notwithstanding General McDowell, his commander, had cautioned him to keep closed up. The violation of this principle of war proved his destruction. Shields, however, was urging General Carroll, commanding the Fourth Brigade in the advance, "that this was the chance of a lifetime, that the German bull dogs were on the heels of Jackson." But Carroll, a fighting officer, did not seem so certain of this, and did not attack until the eighth of June, when he was quickly and easily repulsed on the bridge at Port Republic. Fremont, since crossing the Shenandoah at Mount Jackson, grew

cautious. Fremont had also felt the pulse of Ashby, and therefore moved slowly. The signals waving on the Massanutton warned Ashby that Shields was rapidly advancing on Jackson at Port Republic. The morning of the sixth of June broke clear and beautiful after the storms of heavy rain the previous days. No approach of the enemy had disturbed, so far, the horse or horse artillery. In the meadow near Harrisonburg, Ashby's men were still lounging, with horses grazing. Their chief, though, was mounted and alert, watching his videttes. He knew that his commander had not yet reached Port Republic, the point of safety between the two converging Federal columns. Jackson, after his force had arrived at Port Republic, could, if the worst came to the worst, cross his army over the bridge there, then destroy it, cutting off Fremont. He could then take his choice either to strike Shields or pass through Brown's Gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains on to Richmond. The limitations of this campaign, and the instructions that compelled it to revolve within a certain sphere must be borne in mind. This sphere is contained in the strategy of Lee: "To threaten that line, Harper's Ferry,"

but, dominating all tactics, Jackson must hold the power to re-enforce Richmond. So General Jackson was limited by Lee, as Ashby was by Jackson. General Jackson could play the game of tactics as he pleased, but under no circumstances was he to endanger his power to answer the call from Richmond. Ashby could fight his rear guard to the muzzle of the enemy's guns, but must not call for infantry re-enforcements if it could be avoided; otherwise, he might defeat the plans of Jackson and therefore Lee's. How splendidly Jackson accomplished the great work committed to him all the world knows. How splendidly Ashby accomplished the great task committed to him the world does not know. We find, in reading General Jackson's official report, the reason why Ashby made his last desperate charge with infantry late in the afternoon of the sixth of June. General Jackson says: \* \* \* "The main body of my command had now reached the vicinity of Port Republic."<sup>1</sup> \* \* \* "General Ewell was some four miles distant." \* \* \* <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 1, page 712.

<sup>2</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 1, page 712.

The date of the sixth is fixed by General Jackson, in referring to the death of General Ashby on the sixth, in the preceding clause, and by his expression in the extract quoted, "had now reached the vicinity," etc. The reason was that Jackson had not yet arrived at Port Republic, the only position from which he could either act on the offensive or defensive, and still keep within the limitations of his imperative instructions: that is, fight or retreat to Richmond. Before going into the last engagements of Ashby we quote what Colonel Chew says of them: "The day of his death was probably the most brilliant of his life. He had routed Wyndham and his cavalry, and dashing forward in pursuit of the routed force, discovered that instead of retreating towards Harrisonburg he had turned towards the turnpike, and after reaching it had turned towards Staunton. General Ashby saw immediately that if the enemy at Harrisonburg could be checked an opportunity was offered for capturing this force. \* \* \* He applied to the commander of the rear brigade to move to the hills facing Harrisonburg to protect this movement. This was declined, however, and a messenger sent to General Ewell, whose division



was in the rear, he came promptly to the rear and, discovering that the movement was necessary, at all events to protect his rear, promptly coincided with General Ashby, and ordered the infantry to report to Ashby. When he met General Ashby he complimented him upon his 'brilliant exploit.' As Ashby rode along the lines he was received with vociferous cheers from the men. A delay had been caused by sending the messenger to General Ewell, and the enemy had gained the hill he desired to occupy. It was determined, however, to attack them."

General Fremont advanced on Ashby on the sixth of June with Colonel Sir Percy Wyndham commanding the First New Jersey Cavalry. It had been bruited about for some time that Sir Percy intended to capture or bag Ashby, as Blinker's Dutch had bragged that they would bag Jackson. We will soon see that both threats ended in failure, and that Wyndham fought only enough to bag himself with sixty men and three or four officers. Ashby, watching his videttes this June morning saw a body of the enemy's cavalry advancing on them. He made his dispositions so as to decoy the cavalry to advance

on him, and at the same time ordering some of his horse to strike the enemy on the flank and gain their rear. Ashby, charging in front, and his flankers in rear, soon gobbled up the Englishman and most of his squadron. It is said by those who saw the Englishman after he was captured that he became indignant when laughed at and called a Yankee. Sir Percy also flourished around in this locality without either harm to himself or to others. Colonel Mosby was after him, but General Ashby had taught him that "discretion was the better part of valor." He was created a colonel at the start, and, as far as known, remained one to the end. The writer has felt pride and pleasure up to this point in writing this sketch of Ashby and his men, but the shifting scene changes in its rugged splendor. The actor for the first and last time falls upon the heart of the great valley, the stage of his glorious achievements. It has been forty-five years since then, yet some who read this sketch will find with the writer that it is hard to say "good night, sweet prince, good night." Why is it that greatness, genius, ever lonely itself, reflects sadness, as the mist resembles the rain? After the capture of Wyndham, Fre-

mont presses his infantry to the front. Ashby, seeing this movement of the enemy, dispatched a courier to the commander of Ewell's rear brigade, who refused the assistance asked. General Ewell was then notified, who returned with the infantry, the 58th Virginia, Colonel Letcher, and the First Maryland, commanded by Colonel Bradley T. Johnston, afterwards promoted to General commanding the Maryland line. Colonel Munford was placed in command of the cavalry, and directed to keep the horse artillery playing on the Federal cavalry on a hill in front. Ashby, with the infantry, intended to strike the enemy in flank; the Pennsylvania Bucktails and the 52nd Ohio. The Bucktails were commanded by the gallant and noble Colonel Kaine. The delay in receiving the infantry force had changed the attack as intended from a flank to a front attack near a wood land, with the fighting Bucktails protected by a fence. Ashby, always mounted, ordered up the 58th Virginia, a small regiment. Here a hot and stubborn fight ensued with Ashby everywhere animating his men. Seeing his men suffering under this heavy fire and making no headway, he ordered the 58th to cease

firing, and, putting himself at their head, directed a charge with the bayonet. His horse being killed, and instantly recovering his feet, he gave his last ringing order for the cold steel, as a ball pierced his heart. The answer behind the cold steel was the Rebel yell of the 58th, as Johnston closed on the flank. Virginia and Maryland had swept the field, but amid the burning vespers of June, Turner Ashby fell upon "death's royal purple."

## Chapter XIV.

### JACKSON'S EULOGY—ASHBY NOT A PARTISAN—LEE'S DISPATCH.

The delay caused by the rough handling of Fremont's infantry advance by Ashby on the day of his death gave General Jackson another day, the seventh of June, to prepare for the coming conflict, which began on the eighth of June. Two days of this time grew out of the destruction of the Mount Jackson bridge, from the third to the fifth of June. The third day was the result of Ashby's fight on the sixth. The fourth day, owing to that fight, resulted in Fremont's caution on the seventh. These four days, by the "admirable audacity and skill," says Fremont, the "infernal activity and ingenuity," says Shields, of Ashby, in the judgment of the writer and many others, gave Jackson at the last the power to successfully complete his brilliant combinations and immortalize the name of "Stonewall." Take the valley campaign alone: The first march down the valley, the fight at Kernstown, the retreat up the

valley, fighting every day, the twenty-eight days shelling of Banks about Edinburg, the advance on Milroy at McDowell, the advance in flank on Banks at Strasburg, "the running fight" from Middletown to Winchester and on to the Potomac, the retreat from Winchester, as Shields and Fremont converged on the rear, the burning of the important bridges—the White House, Columbia, and Mount Jackson,—the heavy rear guard fighting of shot and shell, in front of Fremont from Cedar Creek to the end, will give some idea of what Fremont and Shields meant in their references to Ashby. It will also give the reader some just grasp of the hard and great work Ashby accomplished. By the light of his guns the infantry bivouacked; their reveille was the clash of his charging squadrons. It is known how Jackson first repulsed Fremont (the hard fighting General Ewell commanding the engagement at Cross Keys on the eighth, and calling him over the bridge at Port Republic), burnt the bridge, advanced, met Shields, and whipped him in sound if not in sight of Fremont across the river on the ninth day of June. The battle of Port Republic was a bloody fight of four hours. Here the intrepid

Dick Taylor, with his Louisiana Brigade, embracing the Tigers, made three desperate charges on the Federal battery before it could be held, and then only with assistance. Here a part of Ashby's old command, the horse artillery, under the gallant and skilful Chew, with Lieutenants Jim Thompson and Tuck Carter, fighting their guns "with a boldness almost to a fault," glorified the memory of Ashby as he rested in the classic environs of the University of Virginia.<sup>1</sup>

In the last heavy skirmish of General Ashby, Lieutenant-Colonel Kaine of the Pennsylvania Bucktail Rifles and some of his men were captured. Colonel Kaine, immediately after he was taken, in a conversation with Captain, afterwards Colonel Herbert, who commanded the Maryland skirmishers on that occasion, said: "I have to-day saved the life of one of the most gallant officers of either army,—General Ashby,—for I admire him as much as you can possibly do. His figure is familiar to me, inasmuch as I have often seen it on the skirmish line. He was today in fifty yards of my skirmishers sitting on his horse as if unconscious of his danger. I saw three of

<sup>1</sup> He and his brother both reinterred in Winchester after the war.

them raise their rifles to fire, but I succeeded in stopping two of them, and struck up the gun of the third as it went off. Ashby is too brave to die that way.”<sup>1</sup>

Rare and glorious fate, that Ashby's gallant and generous foe should pronounce his first eulogy. A magnetic heroism to draw alike the love and admiration of friends and foes. Ashby was dead and Colonel Kaine did not know it until after this conversation.

General Jackson, it is reported, rode with his staff through his army after the death of Ashby to inspire and encourage the men, fearing the depressing influence of his death. General Jackson says: “An official report is not an appropriate place for more than a passing notice of the distinguished dead, but the close relations which General Ashby bore to my command for the most of the previous twelve months will justify me in saying that as a partisan officer I never knew his superior; his daring was proverbial; his powers of endurance almost incredible; his tone of character heroic, and his sagacity almost intuitive in

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<sup>1</sup> Averitt page 233.



divining the purposes and movements of the enemy.”<sup>1</sup>

If the adjective “partisan” descriptive of the noun “officer” is restricted to the first clause of General Jackson’s sentence, and was so meant by him, partisan officer would be justified in that connection, but if the adjective describing the noun is descriptive of all the clauses of the sentence and Jackson so meant it, he has not only made a mistake but has done General Ashby great injustice. The military definition of partisan is not only well known to educated soldiers but to the laity generally. It is here quoted: “One skilful in the command of detached troops, who, being well acquainted with the country, is employed to gain intelligence, to surprise the enemy’s convoys, and to perform other duties of desultory warfare.”

In the first place, General Jackson’s own description of Ashby, in the close relations he bore to his command, as his cavalry commander, disproves the partisan idea. The definition confines the partisan to the command of detached troops and also to desultory warfare. To make Ashby a partisan, while connected with Jackson, would

<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 12, part 1, page 712.

make Jackson a partisan also. To make Jackson a partisan would make his campaign in the valley a desultory warfare. The definition it will be seen is based on two central ideas, detached troops and to perform other duties of desultory warfare. Ashby for almost twelve months, the time General Jackson speaks of him, neither had a detached command nor carried on a desultory warfare. He carried on the warfare that Jackson carried on and ordered him to do, and Jackson carried on the warfare that General Lee ordered him to perform. Leaving the definition, and looking at the matter in its broader light, did anybody ever know of a partisan to carry on a desultory warfare with cavalry, infantry, and artillery? Both from the definition and the nature of the service to be rendered, this is not the work of a partisan. We have from the beginning seen that Ashby commanded all these arms of the service.

Leaving this discussion for a moment, we quote on the point Colonel Chew's very apt remarks: "I know he was called a partisan soldier, and yet his whole service was with the regular army of the South, for the most part with Jackson. It would have been fortunate for the South if many

of the West Point generals had possessed the enterprise and indomitable courage and genius of such men as Ashby, Hampton, and Forrest. The qualities of a soldier were all blended in him, and while those qualities might well have been improved by military training, no amount of such training and education could ever make a soldier of eminence of a man who was devoid of them."

Major John W. Carter, of Chew's Battery, forcibly says:

"The idea that Ashby was merely a partisan officer is an entirely absurd one. He was a general of exceeding skill and ability. Ashby was a man of exceedingly good judgment and foresight, and as was remarked of him, by Jackson during the valley campaign, 'he always had an intuitive perception of what the enemy were going to attempt.'"

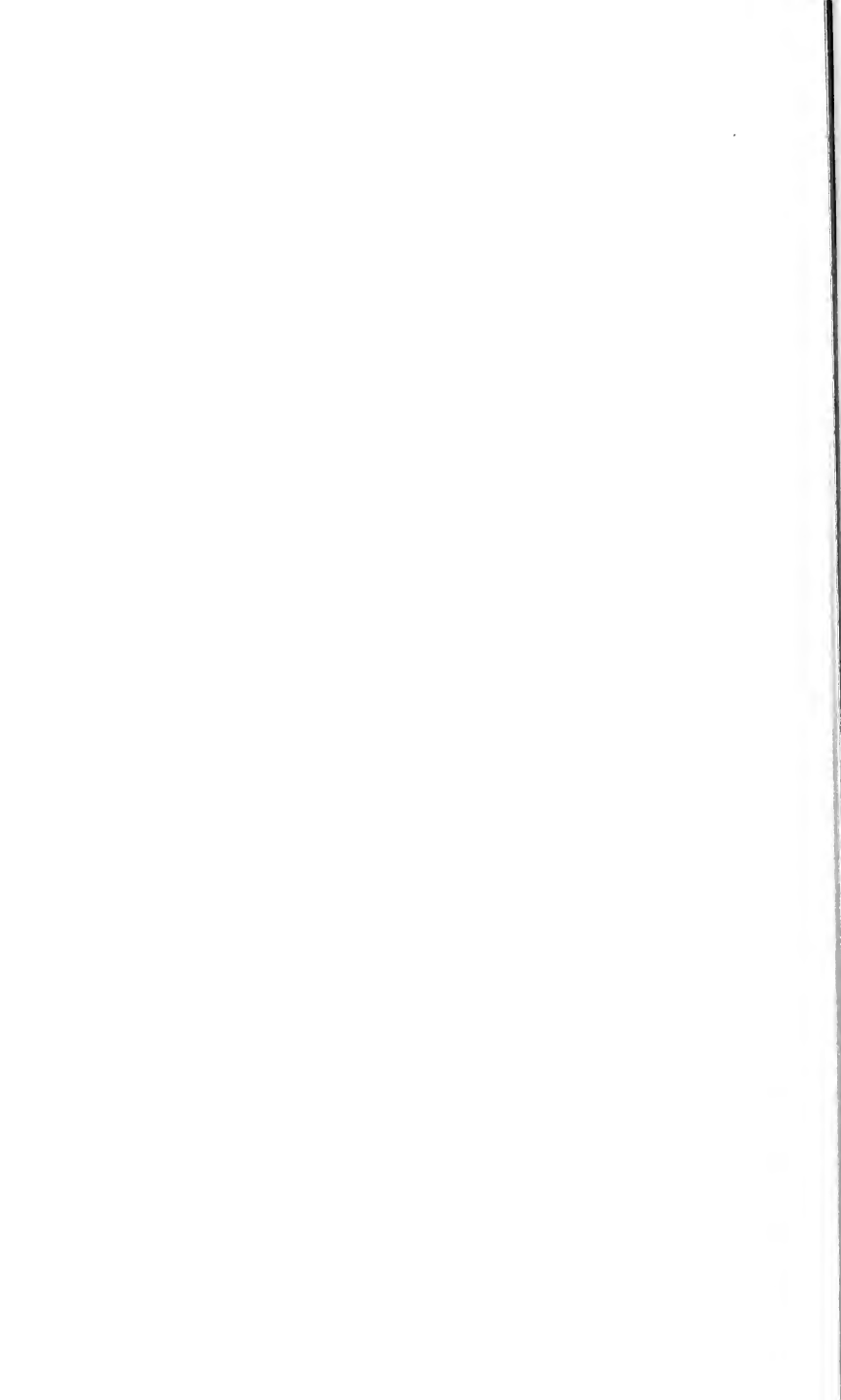
At Kernstown we have seen how by his boldness and skill he held Jackson's right center from ten o'clock in the morning until dark. He employed here his horse artillery, cavalry, and infantry. Was Jackson leaving his most vulnerable point to only a partisan, and was Jackson's army

there kept from being crushed on his right flank by only a partisan? On February 21st and 22nd Ashby was given the power by the Secretary of War, the Hon. Judah P. Benjamin, to raise, in addition to his other command, cavalry, heavy artillery and infantry. Does partisan warfare embrace, to say nothing of infantry, heavy artillery? And this authority was conferred while Ashby was only a Lieutenant-Colonel, three months before he was made a Brigadier-General. On the sixth day of June, to hold Fremont back, he lost his life, commanding Ewell's infantry, snatching the last hour of grace from the jaws of death to aid his commander-in-chief.

Another light on Ashby as a soldier is drawn from General Lee's dispatch to the Secretary of War, the day after his death. He says: "I grieve at the death of General Ashby. I hope he (Jackson) will find a successor. I doubt whether R— would be. \* \* \* We must endeavor to find some one. General Stuart (J. E. B.) mentions Colonel — — of the — Virginia Cavalry. I do not know whether he could carry with him Ashby's men. Send the — regiments you mention.



MAJOR JAMES THOMSON



They will be some help. We must aid a gallant man if we perish.”<sup>1</sup>

Why is General Lee so anxious and disturbed to find a man able to fill Ashby's place if he was only a partisan officer? The truth is General Lee knew Ashby was a commander of great ability and skill, and he shows this in the dispatch to the Secretary of War by refusing to endorse Stuart's recommendation and not recommending any other officer. In a postscript he asks, how would two other officers do? But does not endorse them. One of them proved to be a splendid officer and became a general, as did also the colonel Stuart named, but they had not made their reputations that early in the war. For obvious reasons the names in General Lee's dispatch are left blank as well as a part of the reference to the war records. If Ashby was a partisan officer, General Jeb Stuart was also, for Ashby bore the same relation to Jackson that Stuart bore to Lee. Again, at the time of the death of Ashby, or before, when on the 23rd day of May, 1862, Ashby was made a Brigadier-General<sup>2</sup> by Jackson, there

<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series I, Vol. II.

<sup>2</sup> Confederate Hand-Book.

was but one other Brigadier-General of Cavalry in the Army of Northern Virginia, General J. E. B. Stuart. General George H. Steuart, we have seen from General Jackson's official report, was only in temporary command of cavalry, and Jackson transferred him to the infantry and placed his cavalry, the Second and Sixth Virginia, under the command of Ashby. General Wade Hampton <sup>1</sup> was a colonel, commanding a brigade of infantry at the Seven Pines Battle on the 31st day of May and 1st day of June, 1862.

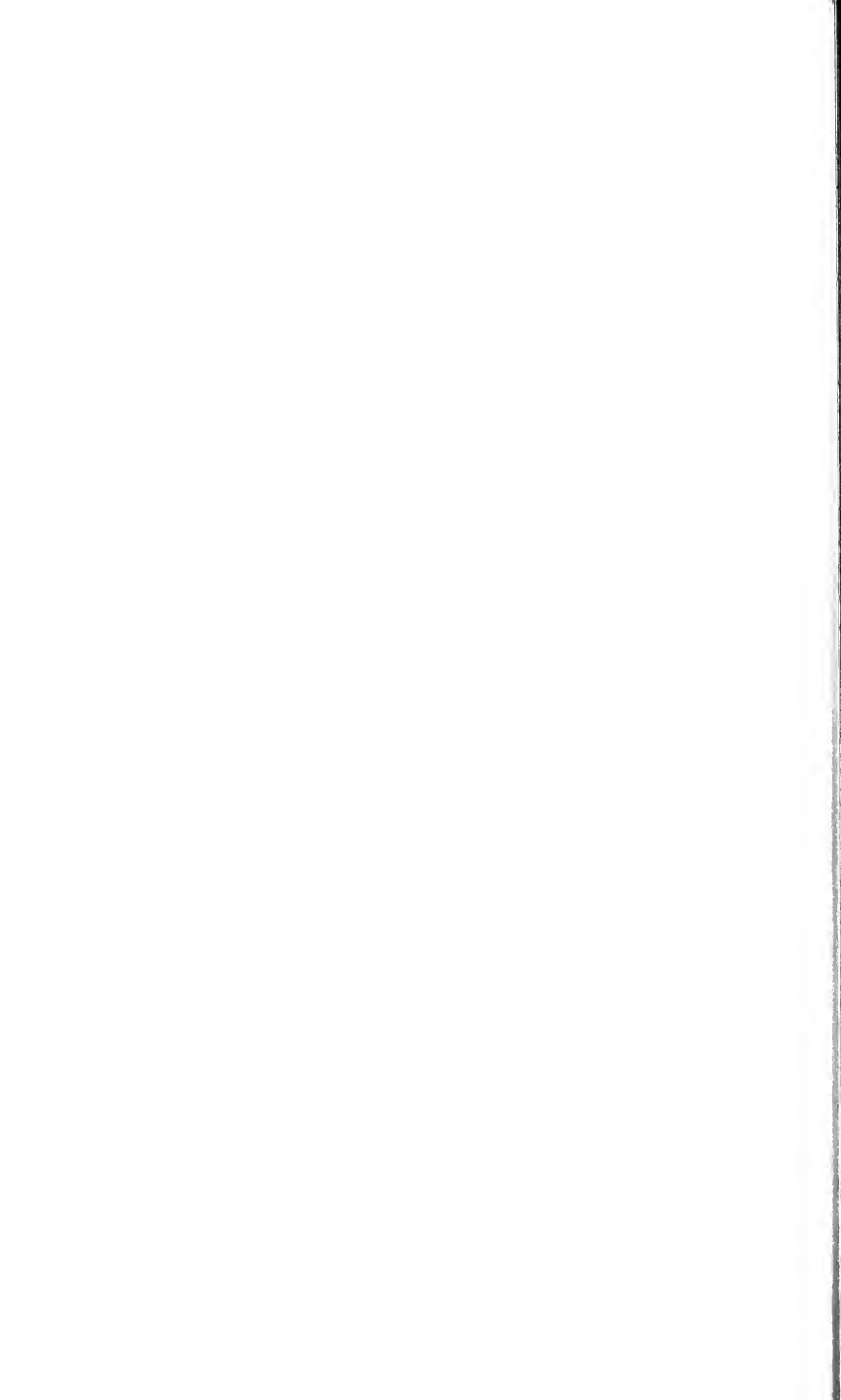
Here we have this partisan officer, so-called, also the untrained soldier, outstripping all the West Pointers and all others in the cavalry, except General J. E. B. Stuart, and holding the same rank of brigadier-general with him. Strange record it seems for Ashby to make without political influence, which he would have scorned to have used, and stranger still, in the face of this record, that he should be called only a partisan officer. We have come to the conclusion after reviewing all the evidence that General Jackson did not mean to say that Ashby was only a parti-

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<sup>1</sup> See General Joseph E. Johnston's report of the battle of Seven Pines, also General Smith's report of the battle of Seven Pines.



san officer, because he could not do so with Ashby's brilliant regular army record staring him in the face. It takes the highest capacity, great boldness and coolness, combined, to make a partisan. It is believed that no officer ever developed into a great commander without these essentials; but it takes more, the latent reserve power of combination. Lee showed his partisan capacity in Mexico many times. He also showed it after the battle of Gettysburg in his letter to Mr. Davis, offering his resignation. He said in effect on this point, that his eyes were failing, he could not see for himself and could not rely on others. Jackson lost his life by doing partisan work at Chancellorsville, seeking information, the exact location of the enemy's lines.



## Chapter XV.

### DEDUCTIONS, REFLECTIONS, EXTRACTS.

As most things are relative in their nature, so, if the reader will run a parallel between Ashby and some of the other general officers of the Confederacy up to the time of his death, his real size will be taken at once. Fitz Lee, Wheeler, and Morgan <sup>1</sup> were only colonels, the great Forrest, <sup>1</sup> too, was still a colonel, and had not then emblazoned his star upon the field of war. Jeb Stuart had not yet "made good" in his ride around McClellan, <sup>2</sup> which caused his fame to circle the world. Kirby Smith, A. P. Hill, Dick Taylor, Ewell, S. D. Lee, had not risen to prominence and to the command of corps, as they did some one and some two years later. Hood and Pickett had yet to develop their incomparable fighting qualities at the seven days' battles around Richmond and Gettysburg. Beauregard had not

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<sup>1</sup> Confederate Hand-Book.

<sup>2</sup> June 13-15, 1862.

then developed as the greatest military engineer of his day. Jubal Early had not made his almost incomparable flank movement through the valley with a small force and threatened the very gates of Washington City in 1864. J. E. Johnston was shot in May, 1862, and thereby lost the command of the army of Northern Virginia. J. B. Gordon was still a colonel, and was undistinguished until later in the war. Albert Sydney Johnston, at the moment of his great triumph in strategy and tactics, had gone down on the bloody field of Shiloh. Hampton, a great soldier, rose for the first time as a leader at Trevilians in 1864. Longstreet had not yet won the title of "Lee's war horse." Jackson did not until after Port Republic and Ashby had passed away, encircle his name with the blaze of immortality; and the greatest light of all, Lee, had not yet risen the past master of the science of war, in all of its mighty scope and power. Ashby, before all these general officers had clinched their reputations, by the most superb courage, genius and effort, had done his work, and passed away, leaving a name, around which the fierce light of fame will always beat. On the 21st and 22nd of February, 1862, the

Secretary of War, as we know, authorized Ashby, then only a lieutenant-colonel, to raise cavalry, infantry, and heavy artillery. Henderson, in his *Life of Jackson*, so able and exhaustive a work that Jackson will never need another biographer, says: "Mr. Benjamin, dazzled by Ashby's exploits, had given him authority to raise," etc.<sup>1</sup> Here is the best evidence that he outstripped all others in his short and brilliant career; and here is the best evidence that he was not a partisan. If Ashby had been only a partisan, would the greatest minister of Mr. Davis's cabinet, except John C. Breckinridge, have recognized him by conferring this great power to raise an army corps, cavalry, infantry, and heavy artillery? All the arms of the service, especially heavy artillery, could only comprise a division or a corps. Such distinction is not thrust upon partisans, nor upon any man without marked ability. Who else had such power and authority conferred upon him the first ten months of the war, without military training and without any of the fortuitous aid of the politician or the eclat of the schools? Do ministers of war put such an engine of destruction in

<sup>1</sup> Henderson, Vol. 1, page 273.

the hands of a tyro, first to sacrifice the brave units of their own command, then the cause, for which he and his government are striving to win? Was the great member of the cabinet justified in this unusual authority bestowed upon Ashby? First let him stand or fall by his own deeds. The reader has here only a glimpse of them, but enough to show the brilliant stuff of which he was made. Some of his best officers have given their testimony in strong and striking terms of him in letters and extracts in this volume. The reader should carefully peruse these, as the writers became still more prominent under other commanders, and grew as Ashby had schooled them, to rise equal to every emergency. One, Colonel Chew, became the famous commander of all the horse artillery of the army of Northern Virginia. His rank was equal to that of a general officer in any other arm of the service, except the engineer corps. It will be noticed that the authority conferred by the Secretary of War in February was not revoked either by the President, the Secretary of War or General Lee. General Lee states to the Secretary of War that he did not know Ashby had this authority; neither did General Jack-

son know it, nor the most intimate friends of Ashby. This man of war, whose life was a battle, was also the modest gentleman, the stainless citizen, the true friend and the romantic hero and idol of his men. Red tape, West Pointism, was hard at the beginning of the war to overcome, and Ashby was the only man who broke through this hard shell during the first year. As evidence, witness Forrest with his command taken from him and compelled to recruit another. This Ashby refused to submit to. Hampton had a long struggle of years, as well as Gordon, to rise above this prejudice. Ashby's career being so much more rapid and brilliant, he became the devoted object of the hardest of these shafts of prejudice and injustice. Everybody acquits General Lee of the red tape virus. He rendered to every man the tribute due his merit, West Pointer or civilian soldier. His personal staff of three brilliant officers, Colonels Taylor, Venable,<sup>1</sup> and Marshall, were not West Point men. One was a banker, one a professor, and the other a lawyer.

<sup>2</sup> "In the beginning of the war, when war was

<sup>1</sup> A flower to the memory of dear old Ven., whose noble life will be cherished long by many students of the University of Virginia.

<sup>2</sup> Colonel Chew's letter.

a novelty to a large majority of the soldiers of the South, Ashby developed a skill that was equal to that of any officer who had the advantage of a West Point education. He always appeared to be equal to any occasion that presented itself, and his capacity and ability seemed to broaden as the theater in which he operated expanded. Ashby early won a brilliant reputation. He was the kind of a man around whose character there was a halo of romance. He was perfectly pure and chaste in his character, gentle in manner and won the devotion of all who came in contact with him. He was devoted to the cause of the South, thoroughly patriotic, and was always ready to co-operate with any officer under whom he served. It has always been my deliberate judgment that had he lived he would have been recognized as an officer of extraordinary skill and brilliant capacity. It was said of General Lee and Stonewall Jackson that they never saw the enemy in their front that they did not want to attack them, and this disposition was fully developed in Ashby's character. He was preeminently a fighter. I hope you may succeed in giving a history of this remarkable man that will do justice to his career."



Major Carter says, in his letter, "He was a general of exceeding skill and ability. Ashby was a man of exceedingly good judgment and foresight; and, as was remarked of him by Jackson during the valley campaign, he always had an intuitive perception of what the enemy were going to attempt."

The following extract is from the letter of Dr. N. G. West, surgeon on General Ashby's staff:

"The company organization was most excellent. This was entirely satisfactory to the men, as the supreme commander was the same in either case. It will be remembered that the command was usually in the field engaged in actual hostility, and was considered sufficient for practical and fighting purposes. These circumstances prevented regimental organization. General Ashby was a man before he was a soldier. He was able to lead, direct or plan. He had in his command proper cavalry, artillery and often infantry added thereto temporarily. He was a man equal to the emergency, and had a reserve force for that which might come next. Little more than a year had passed since he had emerged from country pursuits, became a soldier and filled a great portion

of the world with lasting fame. Mindful of the honor conferred in each and every one of the several assignments of the P. A. C. S., I hold as a peer of any the retrospective pride in the fact of the membership of the Ashby command."

The following extracts are from the letter of Dr. T. L. Settle, surgeon on the staff of General Ashby, and also the friend of Ashby before the war began. It will be noted that Ashby organized the first raid that became so popular with Southern commanders of cavalry later in the war:

"Ashby suggested the first raid of which I have knowledge. It was to select his men, leave the valley and capture General Gary, encamped at Markham. General Jackson at first agreed, but after considering the proposition declined to allow Ashby to leave his (Jackson's) front. This was in the spring of 1862. His first attempt at leadership, which was successful, was when quite a youngster. During the construction of the Manassas Gap Railroad the employees raised a racket in the shape of a riot. Ashby promptly gathered together a few brave and courageous spirits, marched to the place of trouble, and speedily restored peace and order. He then or-

ganized a company of cavalry. This company was the nucleus around which he collected, by authority of the War Department of the C. S. A., other companies, which constituted the Ashby command until his promotion to Brigadier-General. Jackson, in my opinion, held Ashby in high esteem. The night after Ashby was killed Jackson said Ashby had never given him a piece of information about the enemy that proved to be incorrect. I have in my possession an autograph letter from Jackson forwarding Ashby his promotion to Colonel of Cavalry, C. S. A., which is very complimentary and mentions his (Ashby's) well earned promotion. Ashby's discipline has been much discussed. He did not believe in machine-made soldiers. At any rate he and his men were always equal to any and all emergencies that arose and came their way. As to my opinion of Ashby, my limited vocabulary would utterly fail to express it. Suffice it, that as a citizen and a soldier his example is worthy of the emulation of the youth and the adults of any community."

Lieutenant-Colonel Lige White was transferred from another company of cavalry at the beginning

of the war and joined Ashby; "because he was the man doing the fighting at that time."<sup>1</sup>

Colonel White had a splendid battalion of cavalry that he raised, which became a part of Ashby's brigade. The writer heard General Hampton say that he "never ordered White to clear the road of the enemy that he did not ride over everything in sight." He was badly wounded some eight or ten times, but as soon as he could go, he was up and seeking the fight again.

The noted fighter, Colonel Harry Gilmore, of Maryland, was also at one time a member of Ashby's horse, Company G. If the first rule of war is to make no mistakes yourself, we can look as carefully as possible, and they will be hard to find in Ashby. If the second rule is to take advantage of your adversary's mistakes, it will appear from the following quotation how on the alert he always was in this direction. Colonel Chew says:

"I have seen General Ashby under fire in fully a hundred battles and skirmishes, and he always appeared to me to be absolutely without consciousness of danger, cool and self-possessed, and ever alert, and quick as lightning to take advantage of

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<sup>1</sup> His language to the writer.

any mistake of the enemy. He was always vigilant and remarkably sagacious in discovering erroneous movements on the part of the Federals."

Could a tribute be finer than this from the commander of all the horse artillery of Lee's army before he was twenty-two years old, who fought under all of its commanders, and is today as competent an authority on military questions as any man living in the United States. If further testimony is needed, turn to General Jackson's official reports on both points. If we try him by the harder test laid down by Generals Lee and A. S. Johnston in letters to the President, Mr. Davis, that of success, he will not be found wanting. He never failed to accomplish the duty assigned him, nor failed on his own initiative. Ashby had a passion for war and danger.<sup>1</sup> At Boteler's Mill, upon his white horse, he rode back and forth on the crest of the hill to encourage the militia under a hot fire from sharpshooters. When the fire was hottest the moving picture becomes motionless—the Centaur of the South.<sup>1</sup> At Winchester, permitting himself to be cut off by two of the enemy, he cuts down one with his saber and captures the

<sup>1</sup> Cooke.

other. Ashby was an expert swordsman as well as horseman. His was not the heavy cut of Richard Coeur de Lion, but the more deadly thrust of Saladin. Ashby, as all successful generals do, grew with his opportunity and the responsibility of increasing power. He was the typical product of Southern civilization, and "all things high came easy to him." He has left to his countrymen, to be cherished as their ideal, the asset of a moral and military classic.

It is difficult to articulate the latent power that Ashby possessed on demand. We will have to go to the scientists for the triple word to express it. "Ultra-atomic-energy." The great repose of multiple power and energy, at the psychological moment.

To the stranger, who may chance to read this sketch, Ashby's life may seem to be overdrawn. If the stranger could know a modicum of even what the writer knows, not to mention his comrades, he would realize that the half has not been told. Ashby taught his brigade that the business of their lives was to "take the bulge" and die defending the South. This gray line grows thinner year by year, but they would not exchange

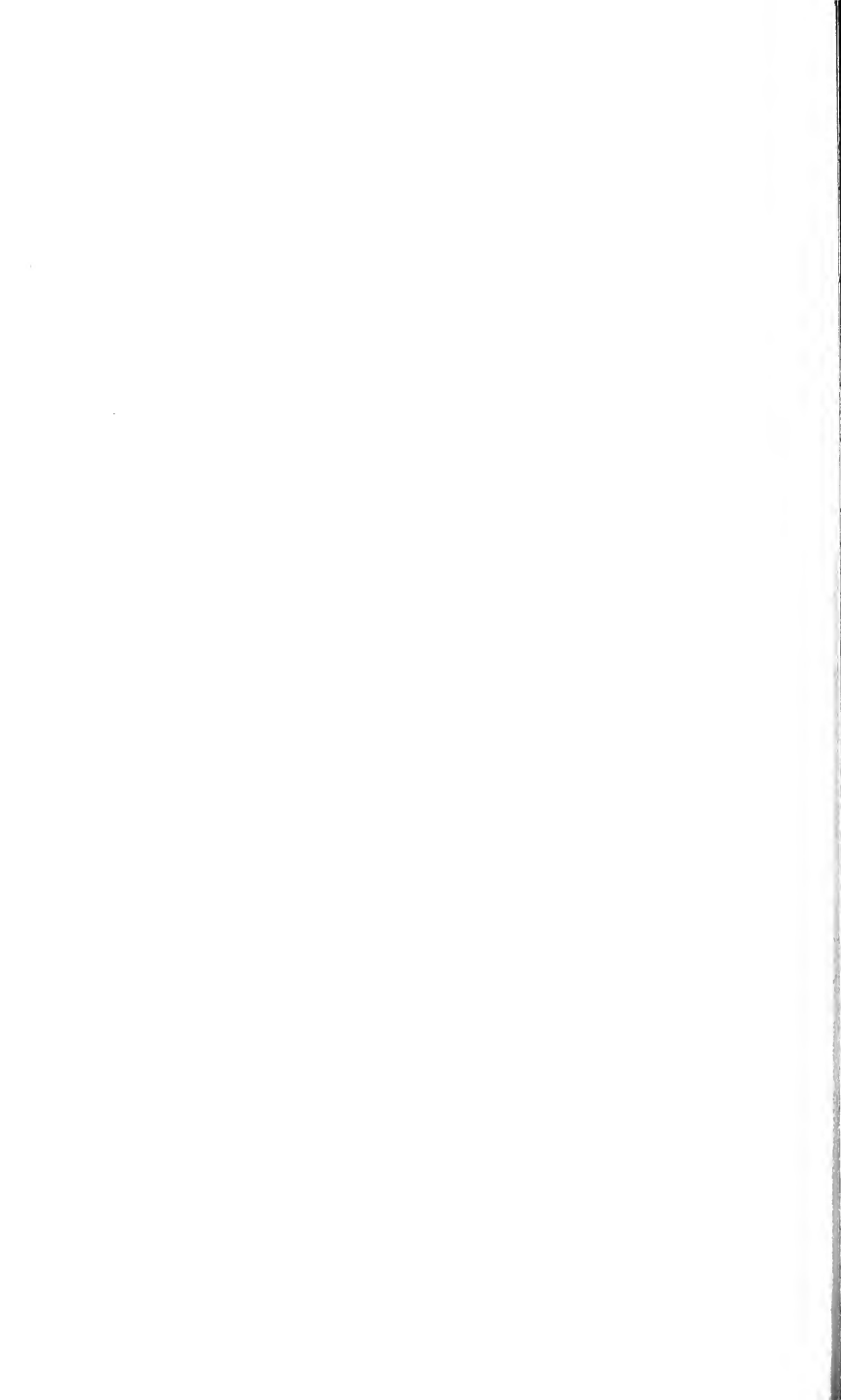
their recollections of each other and their matchless leader for all the other things the world holds priceless. If Ashby had lived after General Jackson united with General Lee around Richmond, he would have been left in command of the valley. Then would the time have arrived, in the judgment of the writer, which Ashby would have seized to form a division first, and then a corps, under the authority of the Secretary of War, given him in February before. The young men not already in the army would have flocked to his colors, as we have seen before. General Lee would have had another "right arm" to execute his grand strategy, and to capture Harper's Ferry en route to Sharpsburg in 1862, and in all probability have won that battle. The writer's connection ceases, at the death of Ashby, with his old brigade.<sup>1</sup> There never was a more spirited set of men and officers than the "Old Guard" who followed the hard and brilliant fighters, Generals W. E. Jones, T. L. Rosser, and James Dearing, their later commanders to the bitter end, where the Southern cross went down in the splendid

<sup>1</sup> 7th Virginia, 12th and 11th Virginia regiments and White's Battalion (and the 6th Virginia Cavalry from June, 1862, until after the battle of Gettysburg).

pathos of its ruin. The maids of Carthage strung the bows of their defenders with their hair in devotion to their cause. What did the noble women of the South do for their country? Everything that love and devotion could sacrifice they gave; their fathers, husbands, sons, and lovers, their substance, the work and mercy of hearts and hands. The Southern cause had its embattled strength in the moral power of their hearts. The faithful slave should have a monument erected in the capital city of every Southern State. The body servant of the Southern soldier was last to be seen on entering battle and the first to render service afterward. The slave was the faithful friend at home of the women and children. It is not more certain that the Confederate army could not have fought without men than that the women and children could not have lived without the kindness of the faithful slave. The writer declares most deliberately that but for the reconstruction acts of Congress, distilling the poison of the toad through the carpet-bagger, the two races would have been friends to this day, and so remained. Freedom, the delusion of destruction, was thrust upon the colored race.



Kind masters, who provided for all their wants, were exchanged for taskmasters, who required "brick without straw." Liberty, without self-training, becomes the instrument of its own destruction, and for nearly a half a century the history of the colored race has proved the truth of this natural law. This sketch can close with no more fitting allusion than to name the faithful servants of the writer's own family: Jim Crawford, Sam Ashley and Henry, body servants in the war; Bill Smith, farm hand; Tom Ashley, blacksmith; Eliza Crawley, cook; Judy Smith, and Louisa Ashford, housemaids.



## Chapter XVI.

### LETTERS—COMMENTS—OFFICIAL EXTRACTS.

Delaplane, Va., March 1, 1907.

Clarence Thomas, Esq.,

Middleburg, Va.

My dear Clarence:

I am glad you are writing a military sketch of General Turner Ashby. His men and our people generally feel that he has not had justice done him.

Hoping that success may attend your efforts, I am,

Truly your friend,

(Signed) Henry S. Ashby.

The above letter is from General Turner Ashby's kinsman, Henry S. Ashby, of Fauquier County, Virginia. As a youth he joined Mosby's command and proved he was made of the same fighting metal as the General. In "Mosby's Rangers," on pages 114 and 118, it is seen that

he rode with the boldest men of the command—Lieutenant Tom Turner of Baltimore, Mountjoy, John Edmunds, and others.

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It is a work of supererogation to give official notices and reports of the commanding officers of the Army of Northern Virginia on the record of Lieutenant-Colonel R. Preston Chew, commanding before the close of the war all the horse artillery of that army. They run through some twenty books of official reports of the United States Government. Before introducing Colonel Chew's letter on General Ashby a few will be given, as well as some extracts from his commanders, since the war. General Charles S. Winder, speaking of him and his battery in the battle of Port Republic, says:

“Captain Chew here reported to me and did good execution with his battery, displaying great skill and accuracy in his fire.”

General Jackson says of this fight also:

“Chew's Battery now reported and was placed in position and did good service.”

General Munford, in the Maryland campaign of 1862, says:

"Captain Chew used his guns with great coolness and effect, and his battery only retired when he had exhausted every round of ammunition."

Also in the spring of 1863, including the fight at Crampton's Gap, he reports:

"Captain R. P. Chew, as true as steel, and ever ready, deserves to be mentioned."

General Jackson, writing to General Lee, February 19, 1863, says:

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<sup>1</sup> "These remarks are applied to Captain R. P. Chew, who now commands the Ashby Battery, which is with Brigadier-General W. E. Jones. Captain Chew has seen comparatively much artillery service in the Valley, and is a remarkably fine artillery officer, and I recommend that he be promoted and assigned." \* \* \*

Again, on the twenty-eighth of February, 1863, General Jackson says:

<sup>2</sup> "The same principle leads me when selections have to be made outside of my command to recommend those, if there be such, whose former service with me prove them well qualified for fill-

<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 25, part 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

ing the vacancies. This induces me to recommend Captain Chew, who does not belong to this army corps, but whose well earned reputation, when with me, has not been forgotten."

" April 6, 1864..

" General:

" Your note concerning Dearing is just received. Major Chew, the officer now in charge of the horse artillery, is doing so well that I am disinclined to put any one over him, although I have a high appreciation of the officer you propose. I think Chew will answer as the permanent commander, and being identified with the horse artillery is, therefore, desirable to others.

" Most respectfully your obedient servant and friend,

" J. E. B. Stuart,

" Major-General."

" Gen. W. N. Pendleton,

Ch. of Artl'y Northern Va."

General Hampton at the fight of Trevillians in June, 1864, says:

" The artillery under Major Chew was admirably handled and did good service."

Again Hampton, at Burgess' Mill, November 21, 1864, says:

"Major Chew, as in all previous fights of the command, behaved admirably, and handled his artillery to great advantage. I beg to recommend him for promotion, and that he be assigned to the command of all the artillery of the cavalry corps."

From letters and papers relating to Colonel Chew, General Hampton says:

"I always regarded him as the best commander of the horse artillery, though that gallant body of men had been under the command at different times of very able and efficient officers."

General Munford, in letters and papers, says:

"I often think of my associations with your splendid old battery of Ashby's command. Gallant Ashby. Yes, superb Ashby. Glorious battery. A battery that the great Alexander, who inaugurated the flying artillery, would have been proud of. Light-hearted, dashing daredevils, who relied upon their guns, and whose motto was level firing with grape and canister."

From letters and papers, Colonel Chew:

“On the morning of April 9th, before the surrender was completed, Chew with a part of his horse artillery passed around the left flank of Grant’s army, and marched to Greensboro, N. C., to join the army of General J. E. Johnston.”

Charles Town, Jefferson Co., W. Va.,  
March 3rd, 1907.

Mr. Clarence Thomas,  
Middleburg, Va.

Dear Sir:

Replying to your favor of February 26th, will say that Chew’s Battery was organized on the thirteenth of November, 1861. We organized at Flowing Springs, in this county, and elected the following officers: R. P. Chew, Captain; Milton Rouse, First Lieutenant; J. W. McCarty, Second Lieutenant; and James W. Thomson, Second Lieutenant. McCarty, after serving with us for some time, resigned and joined the cavalry; and Rouse, when we re-organized in 1862, was elected Lieutenant in Baylor’s company. Both of these officers served with distinction in the cavalry. John H. Williams and J. W. Carter were



elected lieutenants. I was promoted in the spring of 1864 to the command of Stuart's horse artillery. Thomson was then made captain; Williams, first lieutenant, and Carter and E. L. Yancey, second lieutenants. I was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel on March 1st, 1865. We reorganized the horse artillery, as you will find on the second page of the pamphlet I send, and Thomson was made major, and Carter succeeded to the captaincy. The reputation made by Thomson and Carter is so well known that it is hardly necessary for me to allude to it. They both were dashing officers, bold almost to a fault in fighting their guns and were highly esteemed for their gallantry and enterprise by all the cavalry commanders with whom they served. Thomson was killed at High Bridge on the sixth of April, 1865. I served with Stuart for a few months before he was killed, and during the balance of the war with Hampton, who was made chief of the cavalry.

General Ashby, when we organized, insisted on having all the men mounted, and this was the first battery of horse artillery thus organized in the Civil War. We started out with only thirty-

three men, and three guns, one of which was an English piece, known as "The Blakeley," a rifle gun, that won a great reputation because of the accuracy with which shells from it could be thrown. I served from this time with Ashby, until he was killed near Harrisonburg. He was very fond of the roar of artillery and was with us constantly on the battlefield, and when we were shelling the enemy, either in the advance or the retreat of Jackson's army. I know that on that occasion, the independent enterprise as designated by Dabney and followed by Cooke and Henderson, Ashby was with the army immediately in front of Winchester, and when we were in pursuit of Banks on the Martinsburg road, was in our front, dashing on the enemy with a small force, probably forty or fifty cavalry men. He did not have a large force of cavalry with him on this expedition. Funston had several hundred men, who had become scattered, and the bulk of Ashby's cavalry were picketed from Franklin to the country east of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

It would be folly to say that Ashby would not have been improved by military training and education, but in the beginning of the war, when war

was a novelty to a large majority of the soldiers of the South, Ashby developed a skill that was equal to that of any officer who had had the advantage of a West Point education, and it may be said that he should be classed with Forrest, Hampton, and Morgan, whose remarkable careers are unsurpassed by any cavalry officers in the Confederate service.

I have seen General Ashby under fire in full a hundred battles and skirmishes, and he always appeared to me to be absolutely without consciousness of danger, cool and self-possessed and ever alert and quick as lightning to take advantage of any mistake of the enemy. He was always vigilant and remarkably sagacious in discovering erroneous movement on the part of the Federals. He was with our guns when we were fighting from hill to hill. Upon several occasions I suggested to him that we were lavish in the expenditure of ammunition, but he said he believed in firing at the enemy whenever they showed their heads. He was reckless in the exposure of his person, and when he was cautioned about this, replied that an officer should always go to the front and take risks in order to keep his men up to the mark.

He always appeared to be equal to any occasion that presented itself, and his capacity and ability seemed to broaden as the theatre in which he operated expanded. When it was very necessary to delay the enemy who were pressing after Jackson on his retreat from Winchester, where he had defeated Banks, he displayed great skill and stubbornness in fighting them from every hill top. He would form a skirmish line and open on them with artillery, compel them to halt and form line of battle, and when their superior forces drew dangerously near to his men, he would skilfully withdraw and form on the next hill. At Edinburg, where the two armies confronted each other for thirty days, his cavalry dismounted, and our three guns were engaged almost constantly for twenty-eight days. He had at that time twenty-six companies of cavalry. They were finely officered and well commanded. General Jones said the Seventh Virginia Cavalry had the finest lot of company officers of any regiment he ever saw, and Ashby had planned a regimental organization and selected his field officers when the controversy between General Jackson and himself occurred.

About Ashby's resignation, after he tendered his resignation, Jackson sent for him. This occurred at Conrad's store. On his return, I with several of his officers was on the porch, and when he came up he told us what had occurred, and my recollection of it is as follows: When he met Jackson, Jackson asked him to withdraw his resignation, and told him what reasons had influenced him, Jackson, in withdrawing his resignation, when the Secretary of War sent an order over his head to Loring to fall back from Romney. Ashby told him he had tendered his resignation in earnest and wanted it forwarded to the Secretary of War, and that but for the fact that he had the highest respect for Jackson's ability as a soldier, and believed him essential to the cause of the South, he would hold him to a personal account for the indignity he had put upon him. He then turned and went out of the the tent. He said his purpose was to organize an independent command, and operate in the lower Valley and the Piedmont country. All of the officers present declared their intention to go with him. Jackson restored the command to him, and all went smoothly from that time.

I know he was called a "partisan soldier," and yet his whole service was with the regular army of the South, for the most part with Jackson. It would have been a fortunate thing for the South if many of the West Point generals had possessed the enterprise and indomitable courage and genius of such men as Ashby, Hampton, and Forrest. The qualities of a soldier were all blended in him, and while these qualities might well have been improved by military training, no amount of such training and education could ever make a soldier of eminence of a man who was devoid of them. Ashby easily won a brilliant reputation. He was the kind of man around whose character there was a halo of romance. He was perfectly pure and chaste in his character, and gentle in his manner, and won the devotion of all who came in contact with him. He was devoted to the cause of the South, thoroughly patriotic, and was always ready to co-operate with any officer under whom he served. I don't think this splendid body of men, though gallantly lead by able officers after his death, ever rendered more effective service than they did under Ashby. It has always been my deliberate judgment that, had he lived, he

would have been recognized as an officer of extraordinary skill and brilliant capacity. When Jackson moved down the Luray Valley and reached Cedarville, he directed Ashby to move on Middletown. Funston was sent on with the bulk of the cavalry he had with him to Newtown to intercept the retreating forces of the enemy. Ashby marched rapidly toward Middletown with a small body of cavalry and two guns of Chew's and two guns of Poague's Battery, followed at a distance by the infantry, and ordering the men to follow him as swiftly as possible, he charged the enemy with the guns, the cavalry, artillery, and all moving together. We unlimbered within a few hundred feet of the Federal troops. Ashby with his men charged up to the stone fence along the road, with the cavalry and emptied their pistols into the retreating columns. The same day, near Christman's house, he did the same thing, charging the enemy with forty or fifty cavalry and Chew's Battery. This manoeuvre of charging with the horse artillery was often employed afterward, but was first inaugurated by Ashby in his campaign of 1862. It was said of General Lee and Stonewall Jackson that they never saw the

enemy in their front that they did not want to attack them, and this disposition was fully developed in Ashby's character. He was preeminently a fighter, and with his regiments properly organized and officered, he would have shown himself as dangerous a foe to Federal cavalry as they ever were called upon to encounter.

I don't know what more I could say about him, that you could not gather from the records you have. You can glance over the letter in Avirett's book and you will find among other things an allusion to the battle of Kernstown, where, fully alive to the great necessity of defending Jackson's right flank, and keeping the Valley pike clear, he displayed a skill as remarkable as ever Forrest did on any battlefield.

Pardon me for saying my ambition as a commander of artillery was to handle my guns with skill and effect. I had in my battery four of the finest gunners in the army, and I taught them that their object should be to so handle their guns as to drive those of the enemy from their front, rather than to engage in spectacular display. I selected them for their coolness, intelligence and courage.



And I can say for them that they rarely failed to drive our opponents from the field.

I have, I fear, made this letter longer than need be, but when one gets to talking or writing about these events, it is difficult to be concise and brief as one would like to be. I hope you may succeed in giving a history of this remarkable man, that will do justice to his career.

Yours truly,

R. P. Chew.

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John W. Carter (Tuck) entered the Confederate Army as a youth in 1861, after taking practical artillery training at Charlottesville, Va., and joined Chew's Battery as a private. He rose to be lieutenant and then captain of Chew's Battery before he was twenty years old, Chew and Thomson, his ranking officers, having been promoted. He was promoted to major, but the war closed without his receiving his commission. All the extracts on Major Carter are from the Official Records, except the incident at Piedmont, Fauquier County, Virginia, which was related by the gallant Lieutenant Clapham Smith of Baltimore, Company G of the Seventh Virginia Regiment.

“ On the night of the 16th of May, 1863, says Lieutenant-Colonel O. R. Funston, a party of forty-five men under Captain R. P. Chew and Lieutenant J. W. Carter of Chew's Battery and Lieutenant G. B. Philpot of the Seventh Virginia, were sent down to attack the cavalry company, which was stationed in Charlestown, Jefferson County, which numbered about ninety-three men. The expedition was entirely successful in the beginning. The enemy was surprised about one o'clock at night, and besides several who were killed and wounded and left behind, Captain Chew brought out fifty-six prisoners and seventy-five horses. Unfortunately they were attacked the next day at 2 p. m., after having marched thirty-five miles on their return, at Piedmont, Fauquier County, Virginia, by about a hundred and twenty of the enemy's cavalry, and after a firm resistance, in which the captain commanding the enemy's cavalry was killed, besides several of his command, they were obliged to abandon the prisoners and captured horses.” <sup>1</sup>

Clap Smith said that Tuck Carter's horse being played out he staid with him to give him a lift

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 25, page 145.

just as two of the enemy ahead of their column charged on them, and as they passed them Tuck shot first one and then the other. The enemy seeing the fate of their comrades checked up, when Smith and Carter made their escape. One of the men killed was the captain spoken of in the report and the other a private.

Major R. F. Beckham, commanding the horse artillery at Brandy Station, June 9, 1863, says of Carter at that fight:

“The pieces first placed on Pettis Hill were under command of Lieutenant John W. Carter of Chew’s Battery, and had been repeatedly charged by the enemy, and retaken by our cavalry, and at the time the two guns of McGregor’s were brought towards the crest of the hill it was very doubtful which party had possession of it.”<sup>1</sup>

Major Carter was wounded in this affair where the artillery fought the enemy with sponge staffs. Colonel Thomas T. Munford, commanding the brigade in a skirmish at Charlestown, says:

\* \* \* “Captain B. H. Smith, Jr., Third Company Richmond Howitzers, was also on picket supporting Lieutenant J. W. Carter of

<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 27, part 2, pages 172-3.

Chew's Battery of my brigade with one three-inch rifle gun. Lieutenant Carter of Chew's Battery was wounded early in the action but returned to his gun as soon as his wound was dressed."<sup>1</sup>

General R. E. Lee, writing to the Secretary of War, January 25, 1864, says:

"I have received a copy of an authority granted by the Department to Lieutenant John W. Carter, assisted by Sergeant John Chew and Jasper N. Jones of Chew's Battery, to raise a company of horse artillery within the enemy's lines."<sup>2</sup>

General Lee, in a long letter to the Department, opposed Lieutenant Carter in raising his company, as detrimental to the service in losing good men in the regular army and making others dissatisfied. In this letter General Lee uses the following significant language:

"We must rely for deliverance from our enemies upon other means than our arms. I trust that the truth of this assertion may be realized in time."<sup>3</sup>

Mosby's Rangers says in the last fight in Virginia, which occurred on the tenth day of April,

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<sup>1</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 19, part 2, page 97.

<sup>2</sup> O. R. Series 1, Vol. 33, page 1120.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

1865, the day after the surrender, on the banks of Bull Run, that:

“Lieutenants Thompson and B. Frank Carter” (younger brother of Major Carter), “with about thirty men, charged and checked the advance. \* \* \* In the retreat which followed a few determined men, among them Lieutenant B. Frank Carter, Lieutenant James G. Wiltshire, Sergeant Mohler, Joseph Bryan, Thomas Kidd, B. B. Ransom, H. C. Dear, and a few others, formed a rear guard. \* \* \* This brave little band exposed themselves with reckless daring to save their comrades.”<sup>1</sup> “Lieutenants James G. Wiltshire and B. Frank Carter fired the last shots of the war on this occasion in Virginia across Bull Run in the faces of the enemy.”<sup>2</sup>

San Francisco, California,  
March 10, 1907.

Mr. Clarence Thomas,  
Middleburg, Va.

My dear Clarence:

I have been intending constantly to write you, but, as usual, put it off. The idea that Ashby

<sup>1</sup> Mosby's Rangers, Williamson.

<sup>2</sup> Lieutenant James Wiltshire in the *Baltimore Sun*.

was merely a partisan officer is an utterly absurd one. He was a General and of exceeding skill and ability. That at Middletown his men "stopped and went to looting" has no sort of foundation. In fact I was in a position to know all that transpired there, and certainly saw nothing of the sort. Ashby was a man of exceedingly good judgment and foresight; and, as was remarked of him by Jackson during the Valley campaign, "he always had an intuitive perception of what the enemy were going to attempt." The author of the Middletown story to which you refer has gotten things mixed. At Middletown we overhauled some half dozen suttlers, who in their fright and attempt to escape upset their wagons, scatterings some candies and confectionery, their usual stock in trade, on the pike—nothing to tempt a soldier from the ranks however. Chew, I think, can give you more, and more accurate information of Ashby and his achievements than any one. He organized for him the First Battery of Horse Artillery organized and served under him until he was killed.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) J. W. Carter.

The following letter is from the pen of Dr. N. G. West, of Leesburg, Va., who was appointed surgeon on General Ashby's personal staff at the General's personal request. He is now a distinguished physician of Leesburg, Loudoun County, Virginia.

“Camp Evans, Halltown, Va.,  
“October 17, 1861.

“I herewith submit Surgeon N. G. West's report, and cannot compliment him too highly, and respectfully submit his name as one worthy of an appointment. He is temporarily employed by me as a surgeon.

“Your obedient servant,  
“Turner Ashby,

“Lieut.-Col. Cav. C. S. A., Commanding Jefferson Co.

“Hon. Mr. Benjamin,  
Secretary of War.”

Leesburg, Virginia,  
March 15, 1907.

Mr. Clarence Thomas,  
Middleburg, Virginia.

My dear Mr. Thomas:

Ashby's command consisted, as well as I re-

member, of twenty-seven companies. One of these was an artillery company. The company organization was most excellent. This was entirely satisfactory to the men, as the supreme commander was the same in either case. It will be remembered that the command was usually in the field engaged in actual hostilities and was considered sufficient for practical and fighting purposes. These circumstances prevented regimental organization. General Ashby was a man before he became a soldier. He was able to lead, direct or plan. He had in his command proper, cavalry, artillery, and, often, infantry added thereto, temporarily. He was a man equal to the emergency and held a reserved force for that which might come next. Little more than a year had passed since he had emerged from country pursuits, become a soldier and filled a great portion of the world with a lasting fame.

“ His life was gentle, and the elements so mixed  
in him,

That nature might stand up and say to all the  
world:

    This was a man.”



I never heard of the men looting.

Mindful of the honor conferred in each and every one of the several assignments in the P. A. C. S., I hold as peer of any the retrospective pride in the fact of the membership of the Ashby command.

Very truly yours,

N. G. West.

Dr. Thomas L. Settle, of Paris, Va., was also a surgeon on the staff of General Ashby and a life-long friend. He is now a distinguished physician at Paris, Fauquier County. The following letter from him contains two pieces of information never before published, the details of General Ashby's resignation and probably the first proposition to make a raid on the enemy, which later was so popularized as to become the order of the day:

Paris, Va., March 19, 1907.

Mr. Clarence Thomas,

Dear Sir:—General Ashby's first attempt at leadership and successful was when quite a youngster, during the construction of the Manassas Gap Railroad. The employees raised a racket in the shape of a riot. Ashby promptly gathered togeth-

er a few brave and courageous spirits, marched to the scene of trouble and speedily restored peace and order. He then organized a company of cavalry with which he rendered efficient service in the John Brown raid, and was one of the first to reach Harper's Ferry in April, 1861. This company was the nucleus around which he collected by authority of the War Department of the C. S. A. twenty-six other companies, which constituted the Ashby command until his promotion to Brigadier-General. At the last engagement with the enemy he had in addition to his own twenty-seven companies the Second and Sixth Regiments of Cavalry. In this encounter there were more men engaged than in any cavalry fight to that date, June 6, 1862. He was successful with the cavalry, but met death later in the day in the infantry fight. Ashby tendered his resignation before the Banks campaign. We were encamped near Conrad's store, where the road crosses the Blue Ridge through Swift Run Gap. Ewell came on the mountain at this point to reinforce Jackson. Ashby was quartered near the river, Jackson between Ashby and the mountain. On the morning, I think to the best of my recol-

lection it was in April just before Jackson moved against Milroy at McDowell, Ashby received the order to divide his command. He to retain command of one-half and Major O. R. Funston to command the other, one to report for duty to General Winder and the other to General Taliaferro. I remember he (A.) was very indignant, and said that General Jackson was overstepping his authority; that he had obtained from the War Department authority to organize his command, and he would not submit to such treatment, and if they were of equal rank he would challenge Jackson, though he estimated him as a good man and a very valuable servant to the C. S. A., "but before I will tamely submit I will tender my resignation, and it will be necessary to forward it through General Jackson as my chief." It happened that the writer of this was the bearer of the resignation to General Jackson's quarters. It occurred in this way: One of the command was on the sick list and quartered in a house a short distance just beyond General Jackson's quarters. On reaching General Jackson's quarters, I met the late H. Kyd Douglass, a member of his staff, delivered the document and said I expected

to return in about an hour and would call for the reply. When I got back Major Douglass informed me there was no answer. Next day Generals Winder and Talliaferro came down to Ashby's quarters, spent the greater part of the day and the matter was amicably and satisfactorily adjusted. Jackson, in my opinion, held Ashby in high esteem. The night after Ashby was killed Jackson said Ashby had never given him a piece of information about the enemy that proved to be incorrect. I have in my possession an autograph letter from Jackson forwarding Ashby's promotion to Colonel of Cavalry, C. S. A., which is very complimentary, and mentions his (Ashby's) well earned promotion. I enclose you a copy of it:

“Strasburg, March 14, 1862.

“My dear Colonel:

“It gives me great pleasure to forward your well earned appointment as Colonel of Cavalry.

“Very truly your friend,

“T. J. Jackson.”

“Col. Turner Ashby.”

Ashby's discipline has been much discussed. He did not believe in machine-made soldiers. At

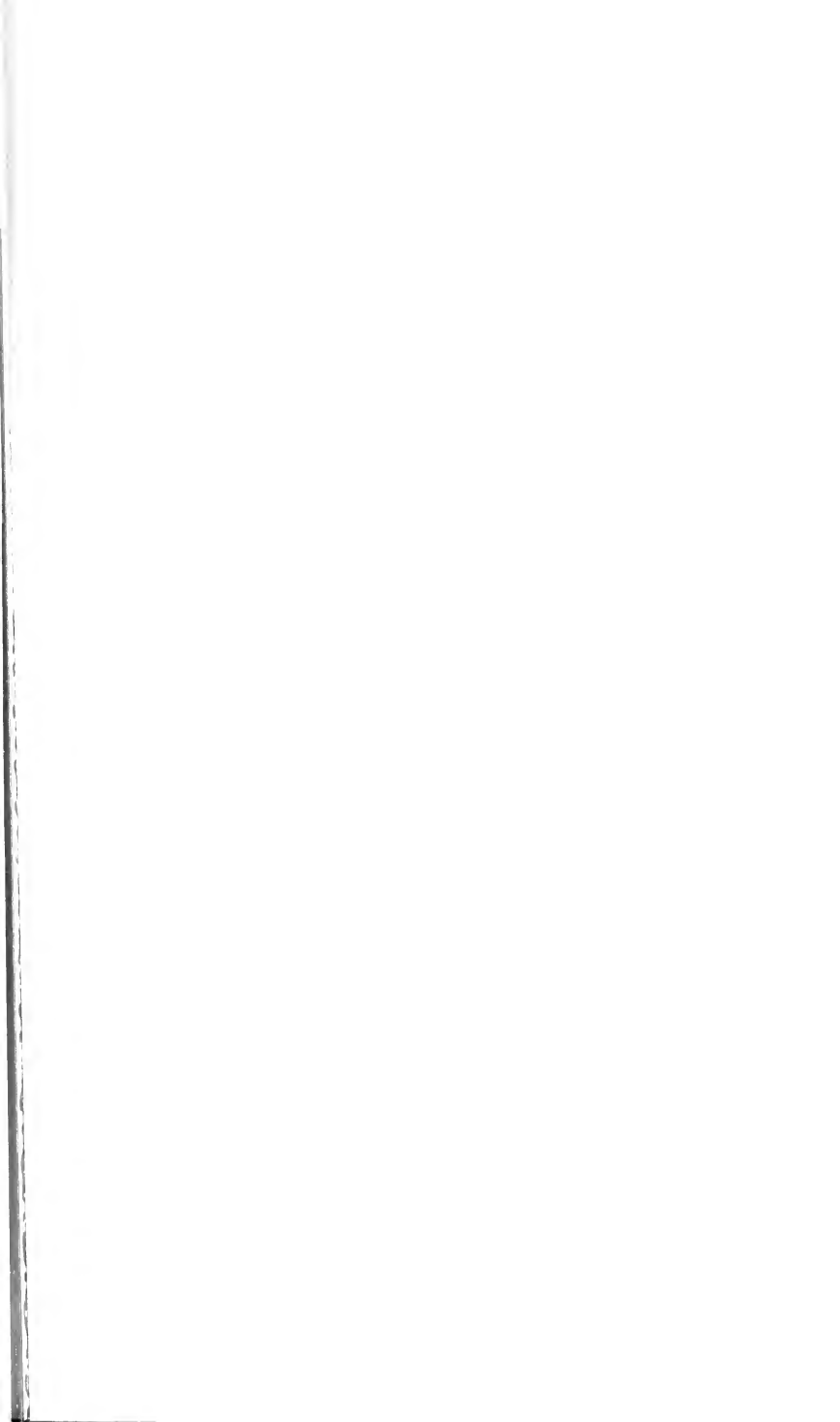
any rate he and his men were always equal to any and all emergencies that arose or came their way. As to my opinion of Ashby, my limited vocabulary would utterly fail to express it. Suffice it, that as a citizen and soldier his example is worthy the emulation of the youths and adults of any community. Ashby suggested the first raid of which I have knowledge. It was to select his men, leave the Valley and capture General Gary encamped at Markham. General Jackson at first agreed, but after considering the proposition declined to allow Ashby to leave his front. This was in the spring of 1862.

With best wishes, I am,

Very truly,

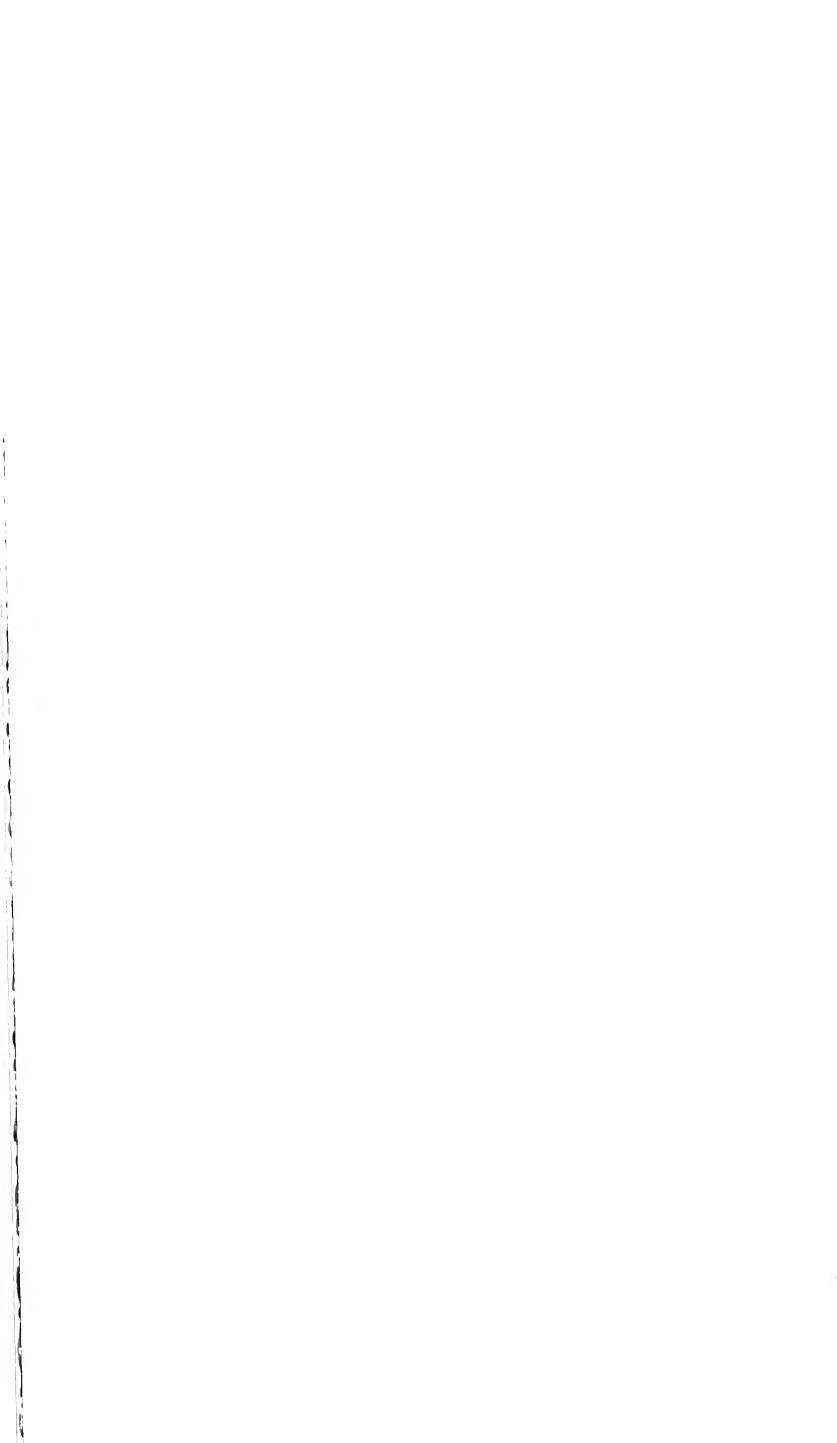
Thomas L. Settle.

**RD - 1.1**









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